

HIS FIRST CHRISTMAS.

The blessed Christmas time knows no difference in nation or people or kindred or tongue. Wherever the wonderful story of that first Christmas in Bethlehem is told there prevails the same spirit of peace on earth to men of good-will. For did he not make of one blood all the nations of the earth? Well may the poet carol:

"God rest ye little children, let nothing you affright;
For Jesus Christ your Saviour was born this happy night."

Wherever the story of Jesus has gone there childhood has grown dearer and motherhood more sacred. O tell this best of all stories to the little ones this Christmas time; tell it to them so that it will be dearer than any fairy tale ever heard. We would not agree with some to abolish the sweet myth of Santa Claus, or St. Nicholas, or Kris Kringle, but we would have the little ones early know the sweet truth that underlies the myth. Children love myth in its place, but they love truth more, and the boy or girl who is not early told all the story of the Christ-child is robbed of the best part of his inheritance.

"Oh, the beauty of the Christ-child,
The gentleness, the grace,
The smiling, loving tenderness,
The infantile embrace,
All babyhood he holdeth,
All motherhood enfoldeth,—
Yet who hath seen his face?"

"Oh, the nearness of the Christ-child,
When for a sacred space,
He nestles in our very homes,—
Light of the human race,
We know him and we love him,
No man to us need prove him,—
Yet who hath seen his face?"

A COUNTRY LIBRARY.

For those of our readers who live in the country, where there is no circulating library, the following experience given in an exchange may prove suggestive.

Each woman who wished to become a member of the association was to pay twenty-five cents as an initiation fee, and dues to the same amount quarterly. She was also to denote one book at the beginning. Officers were elected, consisting of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, librarian, and book committee of three persons. Meetings were held one in two weeks at the homes of the members for the exchange of books. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, and the association incorporated under the laws of the State.

Socials were the means of raising money for the purchase of books, and when it became generally known that we had such an enterprise under way, donations of money and of books were often given us. One of the members offered the use of a room in her house as a place to keep the books; shelves were put up, and regular meetings held there for two years.

In the meantime the number of books had increased until we had nearly a thousand volumes, comprising history, biography, travels, poems and fiction. We still kept up every possible device to obtain money, and soon decided to erect a building to be used as a permanent library. A lot was chosen from a number offered free for the purpose, and the structure, which, when completed, cost about three hundred dollars, put up.

At the end of four years we now have eleven hundred books, and the building all paid for. Books are let to persons not wishing to become members, at twenty-five cents a quarter, or one dollar a year, and many avail themselves of the opportunity. None of the members are asked to give more than their regular dues, the money all having been raised in the usual manner,—socials, entertainments, etc. It is needless to say that it is considered a great benefit to the community, and every one is willing to help it along.—*Houschold.*

EFFECT OF TOBACCO SMOKE ON MEAT.

Cases of poisoning due to meat which seemed thoroughly wholesome have sometimes occurred, and have remained unexplained. In the *Revue d'Hygiene*, M. Bourrier, inspector of meat for Paris, describes his experiments with meat impregnated with tobacco smoke. Some thin slices of beef were exposed for a considerable time to the fumes of tobacco, and afterwards offered to a dog which had been deprived of food for twelve hours. The

dog, after smelling the meat, refused to eat it. Some of the meat was then cut into small pieces and concealed within bread. This the dog ate with avidity, but in twenty minutes commenced to display the most distressing symptoms, and soon died in great agony. All sorts of meat, both raw and cooked, some grilled, roasted, and boiled, were exposed to tobacco smoke and then given to animals, and in all cases produced symptoms of acute poisoning. Even the process of boiling could not extract from the meat the nicotine poison. Grease and similar substances have facilities of absorption in proportion with their fineness and fluidity. Fresh killed meat is more readily impregnated, and stands in order of susceptibility as follows—pork, veal, rabbit, mutton, beef, horse. The effect also varies considerably according to the quality of tobacco. All these experiments would seem to denote that great care should be taken not to allow smoking where foods, especially moist foods, such as meats, fats, and certain fruits, are exposed.

THE MOTHER'S DUTY TO THE TEACHER.

BY JULIA A. TERHUNE.

Said a mother to the teacher of the primary Sunday-school class in which her little ones were: "I am glad to have my children in your class; for you can teach them so much better than I. I can never find time, neither do I know how."

This was not an ignorant mother from a tenement-house. She knew how to attend intelligently to all the details of the secular education of her children. She was not overworked; she always found time to plan and make elegant clothing for herself and family. She was not indifferent to their religious training, but she had not rightly settled the place religion should occupy in her home, and she totally misunderstood the true relation of the Sunday-school to the home.

While the Sunday-school is designed as a help to the parent, there are corresponding duties from the parent to the teacher. Many will naturally suggest themselves to the thoughtful mind, but none seem to me more important than those which should be done before the child enters Sunday-school. I do not now refer to the religious teaching which every parent should give, but to the formation of those habits in children which will render easier the future work of teacher and preacher. The parable of the sower teaches that good soil is necessary, as well as good seed; the prepared heart, as well as the truth to be sown therein. What habits, then, are so important that it may truthfully be said of them, "They prepare the ground?"

First, the very old-fashioned and unfashionable habit of obedience. In the Sunday-school, order is absolutely necessary, that the words of the teacher may even be heard. There can be no rigid enforcement of discipline to compel order, as in a week-day school; there can be little or no punishment. Order must depend largely upon the power and force in the teacher, coupled with the willing obedience of the children. Those who have been trained to such obedience at home most readily obey at school.

It is a mistake to think that little children like best always to have their own way. They like order better than disorder, and are never so happy as when under wise restraint, especially when such restraint is begun, as it should be, at a very early age. The best powers of mind and heart are developed when the discipline is strict, but not severe; and a child more readily obeys the commands of God when he has learned to submit cheerfully to the words of an earthly parent. How shall such obedience be secured? By beginning very early to exact it; by making few rules, giving few commands, but always securing obedience to them.

A second habit which is of great importance in the Sunday-school is attention. A well-known writer on principles of education says, "Habits of attention are permanent mainsprings of education." In the Sunday-school much, of course, depends upon the power of the teacher to secure and hold attention; but her labors are greatly lightened if the children have been taught to listen quietly when an older person is speaking. How often parents and teachers are asked to repeat directions

already plainly given. "I did not hear" is a frequent excuse for disobedience. "I did not heed" is the true reason. Since nothing touches the heart which has not first arrested the attention, it is an obvious part of the mother's work to train children into this habit.

A third habit which is of inestimable value in preparing the heart of the child for further religious instruction, is reverence,—for God's word, for his day, and for his house. When children see that the Bible is loved and daily studied by their parents, that "it answers questions, decides differences, and refutes errors," in the home, a reverence for it will naturally spring up in their hearts, and they will learn to consider it supreme authority, through example even more than from precept. So with reverence for the Sabbath. Some one has said, "A great injustice, a far-reaching injustice, is done to the children when they are robbed of the Sabbath day by any use of it for any other purposes than those for which it was set apart." If it is held sacred by the parents, and made happy as well as holy for the children, by innocent employments in which they can take part and find enjoyment, they will early learn to "call the Sabbath a delight," to welcome its weekly return, and to spend it in a suitable and profitable way. Reverence for God's house may be as early and easily taught.

I need scarcely say that the hearts of children so trained will more readily accept later religious teaching than those who have never been taught to hold the Bible or Sabbath or church sacred.

But so many mothers say, "I do not know how to so train my children," and leave the matter there, not realizing that the responsibility of knowing how to do a duty rests quite as heavily upon them as the duty itself. If God gives a child, and says, "Train it for me," he never withhold ability and opportunity to learn how to do it. The truth is, too many mothers think nothing about the training, or of the careful study necessary to do it aright. "If the potter must understand the nature and properties of the clay which he fashions, and if the goldsmith must be acquainted with the precious metals on which he is to work, surely he who has to fashion living, immortal souls, needs to know at least what can be known of the nature of the material." Besides studying the children themselves, books should be studied as well. Training children is an art. Skill in an art is not intuitive; it cannot be "picked up." The great work devolving upon teachers demands that they should be specially fitted for it. Is not the demand far more imperative, that the mother should, as far as possible, prepare herself for her wonderful work?

This preparation includes also a careful training of her own heart and life. The mother is the child's first book. Whatever he fails to read, he never fails to read her. Whatever she wishes her children to be, that must she make herself. The influence of personal character is stronger than any other influence in moulding the hearts of children. The vital element in the training of her children is that which the mother puts of herself into it. To continually give out of heart-force requires a constant replenishing, by daily study of God's Word, and by earnest prayer for help, for wisdom, for guidance.—*S. S. Times.*

CALLING BACK A LOST SOUL.

Miss M. Graham Brown, of Lan-Chau, says: "Our woman, Mrs. Chang, has been very ill with her chest since she went out one wet day. To-day we received a message to ask whether her daughter might come to our compound to 'call back her mother's soul.' It seems that the Chinese imagine that a fright can cause a person to lose one of the three souls which each person is supposed to possess. One day Mrs. Chang was carrying little Colin in our courtyard when she tripped, and was much startled lest baby had been hurt. He was not, but she thinks that then one of her souls dropped out, and has been wandering about ever since; therefore, she has been ill. Of course we firmly refused, as kindly as we could, to have any such ceremony in our courtyard. But our hearts are saddened to think of a woman who has heard this Gospel so long, being still in so great darkness."—*China Inland Mission.*

A HINT FOR READING CLUBS.

Let each member write on a bit of paper what book he or she would like to read during the next week or two weeks, that is, between the lapses of the club meetings. Then, when the votes are all collected—for these really are votes—let the book that has the greatest number be the one that is read at home, and at the next meeting every member will come with a little notebook in which is written what the opinion of the book is, any little anecdote about the characters or the places where the scene is laid, something that has been heard or read about the author, and a short personal opinion of the book as a specimen of good English, as to what its influence would be on the average reader, and whether it is a book that might be called permanent or evanescent. These written opinions should not occupy more than five minutes in reading, and you will be surprised to find what a fund of information is yours when the evening is over.—*The Ladies' Home Journal.*

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON II.—JANUARY 10, 1892.

A SONG OF SALVATION.—Isaiah 26: 1-10.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 1-4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."—Isa. 26: 4.

HOME READINGS.

M. Isa. 25: 1-12.—A Song of Thanksgiving.
T. Isa. 26: 1-10.—A Song of Salvation.
W. Psalm 48: 1-14.—Our God for Ever and Ever.
Th. Psalm 91: 1-16.—My Refuge and my Fortress.
F. Psalm 125: 1-5.—As Mount Zion—which Abideth for Ever.
S. Rev. 5: 9-14.—A New Song.
S. Rev. 7: 9-17.—The Great Multitude Before the Throne.

LESSON PLAN.

I. A Song of Trust, vs. 1-4.
II. A Song of Judgment, vs. 5-7.
III. A Song of Waiting, vs. 8-10.

TIME.—About B.C. 712; Hezekiah king of Judah.
PLACE.—Jerusalem.

OPENING WORDS.

This chapter contains a song of thanksgiving to be sung by Israel after their deliverance from the armies of Sennacherib, or on their return from the Babylonian captivity. It has a fuller application in the Church's final triumph over all opposition.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

1. In that day—that is, in the day of deliverance foretold in the preceding chapter. A strong city—Jerusalem, strong in Jehovah's protecting favor; type of the New Jerusalem, Psalm 48: 1-3; Rev. 21: 12. Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks—God's saving might their sure defence against every enemy. 2. Open ye the gates—God's command to his angels within the city to open the gates and let the saints march in and take possession. Compare Psalm 21: 7-10; 118: 19, 20; Heb. 12: 22. 3. Everlasting strength—Revised Version, "an everlasting rock;" the Rock of Ages, a certain refuge for ever. 4. The lofty city—the stronghold of the enemies of God and his people. Compare Isaiah 21: 10, 12; 25: 2, 3. 5. Is upright—rather, is a right way; directed by God to a prosperous issue. Psalm 4: 8; 27: 11; 143: 8. Dost weigh—Revised Version, "dost direct." Psalm 37: 23; Prov. 5: 21. 6. Waited for thee—to vindicate thy people and destroy their enemies. 7. Psalm 63: 6; Cant. 3: 11. 8. Let favor be showed to the wicked—continued prosperity will not lead the wicked to righteousness.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the subject of the last lesson? What was foretold in it about Christ the King? What about the Kingdom of Christ? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?
I. A SONG OF TRUST, vs. 1-4.—When shall this song be sung in Judah? How does it begin? Who may enter the strong city? How shall they be kept? What are they exhorted to do? Why may they thus trust in the Lord forever?
II. A SONG OF JUDGMENT, vs. 5-7.—What judgment will the Lord bring upon the oppressors of his people? What is meant by the lofty city? What is said of the way of the just? Meaning of thou dost weigh the path of the just?

III. A SONG OF WAITING, vs. 8-10.—For whom had God's people waited? Meaning of in the way of thy judgments? How is the earnestness of their waiting expressed? What is promised to all who wait on the Lord? Isa. 40: 31. What should men learn from God's judgments? What will be the effect of favor shown to the wicked?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. God is the strength and defence of his people.
2. He is worthy of their fullest trust and confidence.
3. He will deliver them from all their enemies.
4. He will make their path plain before them.
5. His providences should teach men righteousness.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. What is the beginning of this Song of Salvation? Ans. We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.
2. What are God's redeemed people called upon to do? Ans. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.
3. What will the Lord do for his trusting people? Ans. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.
4. What will be the effect of God's judgments? Ans. The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.