

ANGELS HEARKENING.

Psalm cxlii. 20.

Why are the Lord's holy angels so strong,—
Wings never weary, though journeys be long?—
Ah, my child! couldst thou but see the white throng,
They are hearkening, hearkening!

Why are the Lord's holy angels so swift
Up their bright ladder our loads to uplift,
O'er earth and sea to bear blessing and gift?—
They are hearkening, hearkening!

Why are the Lord's holy angels so sure
Aye where to go?—Ah! their eyes are so pure,
How can they smile, and earth's darkness endure?
They are hearkening, hearkening!

So, my child, wouldst thou for God's work be strong?
Swift at His bidding, be way short or long?
Sure-eyed and pure-eyed, 'mid darkness and wrong?
Oh! wouldst thou join in the angels' sweet song?
Then be hearkening, ever hearkening!

BREAD BETTER THAN PEARLS.

I shall first tell you a story, and then teach you a lesson from it. The story I shall translate from a German book, and the lesson I shall teach, as well as I can myself.

An Arab once lost his way in a desert. His provisions were soon exhausted. For two days and two nights he had not a morsel to eat. He began to fear that he should die of hunger. He looked eagerly, but in vain, along the level sand for some caravan of travellers from whom he might beg some bread.

At last he came to a place where there was a little water in a well, and around the well's mouth the marks of an encampment. Some people had lately pitched their tents there, and had gathered them up and gone away again. The starving Arab looked around in the hope of finding some food that the travellers might have left behind. After searching a while, he came upon a little bag, tied at the mouth, and full of something that felt hard and round. He opened the bag with great joy, thinking it contained either dates or nuts, and expecting that with them he should be able to satisfy his hunger. But as soon as he saw what it contained, he threw it on the

ground, and cried out in despair, "It is only pearls." He lay down in the desert to die.

Pearls are very precious. If the man had been at home, this bagful of pearls would have made his fortune. He would have received a large sum of money for them, and would have been a rich man. But pearls could not feed him when he was hungry. Although you had your house full of pearls, if you have not bread you will die. The Arab knew the value of the pearls he found; but he would have given them all at that moment for one morsel of bread—would have given them, but could not, for there was no bread within his reach. So, although he was very rich, he was left to die of want.

Pearls and gold cannot preserve the life of body, far less can they satisfy the soul. Bread is more precious to a hungry man than pearls; and the bread of life is more precious still. Christ has expressly said, "I am the bread of life." How foolish it is to spend oneself in gathering things that cannot feed us if we are hungry, and cannot save us from our sin! "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness," and keep other things in a lower place. The chief thing for each of us is to get in Christ the life of our souls for ever; and then we may gladly accept whatever good things in this life God may be pleased to give us. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

He who is rich, when he comes to die, but is still without Christ for his soul, is like the Arab in the desert, with his bagful of pearls, but perishing for want of bread.

PETER the Great, Emperor of Russia, was one day in a sailing boat, when he became so angry with one of his companions that he seized him with the intention of throwing him overboard. "You may drown me," said his subject, "but your history will tell of it." The reminder was effectual, and the Emperor pardoned the man.