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'The "Messenger" is far superior to anything I know of for the Sunday School.'—W. Ruddy, Toronto, Ont.

Bethany.

Only a little cluster of half-ruined houses with dusty, grey-leaved trees and a dusty road. Only a dark oriental tomb, down the dark stairs of which we grope our way by candle light.

These we may see with our eyes and touch with our hands if we travel to Palestine, but

Have we to-day a thought only of the tumble-down walls of Bethany, a vision only of the stony steps of the tomb? Let us read over again the wonderful story and realize as we never have before all that it means.

Let us get a clear vision of the comfort Christ's coming brought to the sorrowing ones;



BETHANY.

whether in Palestine or here, when we can see only the pictures of these things, what do they mean to us? What does a rose mean to us as we hold it in our hand? Just an ordinary flower bought at a florist shop? Or does it mean a vision of glowing color and sweet perfume; of perfect June and pleasant companionship. What does the soft ring of fair hair mean to us when it slips from an old book into our hand? Is it just rubbish someone has hoarded? Or does it mean a vision of days when the whole joy of our life was centred round a little curly head and a rush of blinding tears at the thought of the little grave.

What does that package of old letters mean to us. Do we toss it aside without a thought, as just so much waste paper? Do we lift our head proudly, with the thought of the love that crowned us, love of mother or father, of sweetheart or friend, written down in words that strengthened us and made it possible for us to win triumphantly.

the wonderful joy that followed; the power and love of the Master who said:

'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'



TOMB OF LAZARUS AT BETHANY.

The Refiner's Fire.

(Mal. iii., 3; Dan. iii., 25.)

(By R. W. Scanlan, M.A., Ph.D.)

He sat by a furnace of sevenfold heat,
As he watched by the precious ore,
And closer he bent with a searching gaze,
As he heated it more and more.

He knew he had ore that could stand the test,

And he wanted the finest gold
To mould as a crown for the king to wear,
Set with gems of a price untold.

So he laid our gold in the burning fire,
Though we fain would have said him nay,
And he watched the dross that we had not seen

As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright,

But our eyes were so dim with tears,
We saw but the fire, not the Master's hand,
And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow,
As it mirrored a form above,
That bent o'er the fire, though unseen by us,
With looks of ineffable love.

Can we think that it pleases his loving heart,
To cause us a moment's pain?

Ah! no, but he saw through the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.

So he waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And his gold did not suffer a whit more heat,
Than was needed to make it pure.

And not by the furnace, but thro' the midst
Passed a thorn-crowned and kingly form,
The fire had no power on the gleaming gold,
So close to his bosom borne.

He has lifted it out from his furnace now,
Too bright for our eyes to see
Till the tears that dim them are wiped away,
On the shores of eternity.

—'Christian Guardian.'

Tighten the Buckles.

(Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.)

It is related that a cavalry officer, with a small number of followers, was pursued by an enemy who were in large force. He discovered that his saddle-girth was becoming loose; his comrades were urging him on to greater speed, but he dismounted, tightened the loose buckle, and then rode on, amid the shouts of his companions. The broken buckle would have cost his safety—perhaps his life. His wise delay ensured his safety.

This incident suggests several spiritual lessons. A very obvious one is that the Christian who is in such haste to rush off to his business in the morning that he does not spare any time for his Bible or for prayer, is quite likely to 'ride for a fall' before sundown. One of the most eminent Christian merchants of New York told me that he never met his family at the breakfast table until he had a refreshing interview with his God over his Bible and on his knees. He