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THE SUNBEAM

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. VII.]

TORONTO, MARCH 13, 1886.

[No. 6.

CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM.



CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM.

THE little boy and girl whom you see in the picture are just such children as you would meet to-day if you were walking in the city where the Holy Child Jesus was born. Perhaps that boy will be a shepherd like David. If so, he must, like David, be brave and hardy; for now, as in David's time, tending sheep is not the peaceful occupation it is with us. The shepherds have to watch their flocks night and day, lest some wild beast, or some equally wild Arab, should seize the straying ones, or even enter the fold.

When that little girl a few years older, she will not be dressed quite as she is now. She will wear a long veil, very much like the one that Ruth wore, and which was large enough to hold the six measures of barley that Boaz gave her to take home to her mother. But this is more like a hood than a veil, for it does not cover the face. Very likely this little girl will be a gleaner, too. Dr. Thompson says that he saw reapers in the fields near Bethlehem cutting barley, followed by women and children who were gleaned, while some of them could be seen beating out the grain they had gathered, just as

Ruth did. What joyful tidings were brought to the children of Bethlehem on the first Christmas, nearly nineteen hundred years ago:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,

All sleeping on the ground,
They saw a flood of glorious light,
They heard a joyous sound."

And this was what they heard: I want you all to learn the words:—"Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

That Christmas gift—God's great gift of His Son for all men—is freely offered to every child who reads these words. O, accept His blessed Gift with gladness. Love Him with all your heart; and when you die you shall be happy with him forever.

LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH.

THE storks are said to be very affectionate and self-sacrificing in their devotion to their young. A fire was raging. The young birds in a nest were suffering with the heat. Their cry touched the mother stork's heart.

She flew to their help. She sheltered the nest with her wings, and actually burned to death while seeking to protect her loved ones with her feathers. How like our Saviour's love for us! The shadow of his wing, how much has it been for my soul? Yes, he covers us with his feathers, and under the shadow of his wing we may put our trust. Better still—the

poor, suffering stork could not save, though she did lay down her life—but Jesus died, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life. He can save unto the uttermost all that come to God by him.

ROOM FOR THE CHILDREN.

Let the little children come
To the Saviour's breast!
Little souls feel weariness,
Little hearts need rest.

Jesus wants a tiny hand
In the harvest field;
To the touch of fingers small,
Giant hearts may yield.

Jesus wants a baby voice,
Praises sweet to sing;
Earth's discordant choruses
Shaming, silencing.

Heaven is full of little ones,
God's great nursery,
Where the fairest flowers of earth
Bloom eternally.

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The Sunbeam.

TORONTO, MARCH 13, 1886.

THE DOOR OF THE HEART.

JESUS knocks to-day at the door of your heart; do you not hear him? He has knocked there every day since you can remember. When you were naughty he knocked there and wanted to come in to clean the naughtiness out and make a home for his Spirit there. When you are good he knocks for you to open the door that he may make you better. Long ago he died to redeem you from sin and save your soul from hell; but he cannot do it unless you unlock the door and swing it wide open for him, that he may enter your heart and live there and be your king and master all your life. Open the door now and say "Come in, dear Saviour."

"I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER."

"UNCLE Bob, I want to be a soldier," said our little Bert, one day. "Whose company do you think I'd better 'list in?"

"Well," said Uncle Bob, "I think I would advise you to enlist under Corporal Try."

"And who shall I fight with, Uncle Bob?"

"You have a good many enemies," said Uncle Bob. "I've noticed General Sulks around a good many times lately. Suppose you try to conquer him first? His soldiers, Scowl and Fret and Pout and Black Looks, are always near him. And, really, I do hate this horrid old General with his ugly soldiers. Don't you, Bert?"

"Yes, sir; I do," said Bert, looking a little ashamed. "But do you think Corporal Try's company is strong enough to conquer General Sulks? He is an awful hand to hang on, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Uncle Bob. "But there is the Great Captain—the Captain of our salvation—who will help you always. One of his soldiers said: 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' If you enlist under Corporal Try, to fight General Sulks or any of your other enemies, you had better ask the Great Captain to help you, or you will be sure to fail."

"I will," said Bert.
Dear little folks, won't you do the same?
—Exchange.

AT THE TABLE.

YOUNG people do not always make as great an effort as they should to be at the table promptly. If a bell is rung, they begin to get ready when it rings; they should be ready to go instantly on the ringing of the bell. That is the only way—to be ready before the call is made. It is not only annoying to others, but it is disrespectful to parents, when the children are not promptly in their places at the meal-time. Be in your place at the right time, and be in your place with clean hands, hair neatly brushed, and clothes



PAPA'S LITTLE GIRL.

properly arranged—above all, with a pleasant temper and kindly words. One of the most strongly-marked distinctions between savages and civilized people is found in their table-manners. Savages eat like animals; civilized people meet at the table for pleasant intercourse, and not merely to be fed.

PAPA'S LITTLE GIRL.

A CHILD all motion, fire and grace,
From fairy foot to floating curl,
With winsome smile and sunniest face,
Was "Papa's little girl."

All summer, where the glowing flowers,
Their dainty banners wide unfurl,
With laugh and song, through joyous hours,
Went "Papa's little girl."

But when the snows lay deep and cold,
And all the trees were frosted pearl,
Far out toward sunset's land of gold
Went "Papa's little girl."

And though she walk the golden streets,
And stand within the gates of pearl,
O will not God remember she
Was "Papa's little girl."

Aye, when his perfect heavenly peace
Shall follow all the earthly whirl,
Faith whispers glad, she will again
Be "Papa's little girl."



KEPT IN DANGER.

FAITHFUL IN LITTLE.

I CANNOT do great things for him
Who did so much for me,
But I should like to show my love,
Dear Jesus, unto thee.
Faithful in very little things,
O Saviour, may I be!

There are small things in daily life
In which I may obey,
And thus may show my love to thee;
And always—every day—
There are some little loving words
Which I for thee may say.

There are small crosses I may take,
Small burdens I may bear,
Small acts of faith and deeds of love,
Small sorrows I may share;
And little bits of work for thee
I may do everywhere.

KEPT IN DANGER.

WHAT a strange picture this is! See how calmly that man sleeps amid hungry and roaring lions, and by the bones of dead men whom they have eaten. How did he get there? Why is he not afraid? If our little SUNBEAM family can't find this out, let them ask father or mother to tell them the wonderful story, as told in the best of books.

A GOOD USE FOR MARBLES.

THERE was once a very poor little chimney sweep in London who longed to learn to read. But how could he? He saw no way.

One morning he was going to his work, and passed a number of boys who had hung their books on a fence and were playing. Our little sweep began to look at the books. He couldn't understand anything, but how he wished he could! Presently one of the boys came up, and in a very unpleasant tone asked what he was about. But the poor child did not get angry; he put his hand in his pocket and took out a marble, and said:

"See here, I'll give you this if you'll let me look at the books; I won't hurt them."

When the boys were done playing, and came to get their books, he asked one of them to read a little to him. He did, and then a bright thought came into the little sweep's head.

"See here," said he, "tell me the letters, I'll give you a marble for every one."

The boy was pleased and began, but in a day or two he came, saying he couldn't teach him any more; the black fingers soiled the books, and his parents had forbidden it.

The poor chimney-sweep turned sadly away. How disappointed he felt. But as he went down the street, he passed a graveyard, and saw the letters on the tombstones. "I can learn there," said he; "my sooty fingers won't stain these, or if they do, the rain will wash them clean."

Again he went to the schoolboy, and asked him to come to the graveyard and teach him; and there he learned the alphabet. By this time the boys had become interested in their little scholar. They took him to Sunday-school, and soon he could read in the Bible. And as he read he learned to love it. He became a Christian boy, and lived to be a useful, faithful Christian man.

Did he not put his marbles to very good use?—*Morning Light.*

VERY EASY.

A LITTLE girl was once punished for doing wrong, when she said, "O those commandments do break awfully easy!" And it is true that it is very easy to sin. This is the reason we should ask Jesus every morning to keep us from sinning through the day.

LITTLE THINGS.

OVER the smallest steps you may follow on and find the most stupendous achievements. From the slight deposit of a little insect arose the coral islands, and the State of Florida. It was Bruce—was it not?—who regained his courage when he saw the baffled spider, which tried to mount up the wall with its unwonted burden, did not mind the number of falls by which he was so often defeated, but kept right on—as if nothing had happened—and won the victory at last. So little a thing as a pin kept a certain prisoner, who was held in solitary and dark confinement, from becoming a lunatic. Knowing that this would be his fate when deprived of occupation, he took a pin from his clothing and threw it down at random upon the floor of his cell. He then employed his time in crawling about to find it; and when he found it, the first operation was repeated. A perpetual series of these performances kept his mind from stagnation and consequent ruin.

DON'T GET INTO DEBT

"OWE no man anything." That is the text, boys and girls. Do you know where I found it?

"In the Bible!"

Right, my dears. And do you know what it means? Well, Johnny; speak up.

"Don't get in debt"

That's it, my little man. It is a very bad plan to get into the habit of borrowing. It sometimes leads into a great deal of trouble. If you borrow a top string or a marble from Willie, be careful to pay him back promptly. If Mary lends you a book, be careful to return it, and in good order. These are little debts, children, but your honour is just as much at stake as if they were greater. So remember to "owe no man anything."

"BEGIN AT ONCE."

"MAMMA, when I am a man I will begin to love Jesus."

These words fell from the lips of a little fellow scarcely six years old. His mother had endeavoured many times to impress on his youthful mind the necessity of early piety, but hitherto all her persuasions seemed in vain.

When the child uttered these words, his mother said: "But, my dear, suppose you do not live to be a man?"

He remained silent for some minutes, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, as in deep thought, and then, with a resolute countenance added: "Then, mamma, I had better begin at once."

LITTLE CRUSADERS.

Who are these, a singing band,
Marching through the listening land
In the tender dew of youth,
In their armour, white as truth,
In the name of Him who calls them
In the morning?

O, the children march away,
In the dawning of their day,
To the battle field that lies
Just beyond their trustful eyes;
And they march away with singing
In the morning.

What is this they singing bear,
Through the dewy morning air,
Shining like a cross of gold
Which the stars and stripes enfold,
And it leads the children onward
Through the morning?

O, that holy sign, half furled,
Means redemption for the world,
And borne on from hand to hand
"For our God—our home—our land,"
They will plant it on the uplands
In the morning.

LESSON NOTES.

B.C. 440.] LESSON XII. March 21.

MESSIAH'S MESSENGER.

Mal. 3. 1-6, & 4. 1-6. Commit to memory vs. 5. 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. Mal. 3. 1.

OUTLINE.

1. The Coming Messenger, 3. 1; 4. 5, 6.
2. The Refining Fire, 3. 2-6; 4. 1.
3. The Sun of Righteousness, 4. 2-4.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

Who was the last of the Old Testament prophets that foretold the coming of Christ? Malachi.

Whom did he say should prepare the way for his coming? His messenger. (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)

Who was this messenger? John the Baptist.

To whom is he compared? To Elijah.

In what was he like him? In his teaching and way of living.

What would the Messiah bring with him? Punishment for the wicked and blessing for the good.

What is Jesus called? The Sun of righteousness.

What does his light drive out of our hearts? Sin and darkness.

How does he come to us? With healing.

Healing for what? For soul and body.
Who only can cure us of sin? Jesus.
What will his light do for us if we let it shine into our hearts? Make us strong and happy.

What is the life of the earth? Its sun.
What would the earth be without it? Cold and dark and dead.

What is our life? The Sun of righteousness.

What are we without him? Cold and sinful and unhappy.

WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

God showed the prophet Malachi that John the Baptist was coming to make the way ready for Jesus four hundred years before it happened. [See the GOLDEN TEXT.]

If you tell to all around what a Saviour you have found, and then, by what you do and say, you show your love from day to day, you will be a little messenger for him, too.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The way of salvation.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

Who was Cornelius? A devout Gentile soldier, to whom St. Peter was sent to preach the gospel.

Who was Lydia? A devout woman whose heart the Lord opened when St. Paul preached.

FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.—MARCH 28.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

Repeat the GOLDEN TEXTS for the quarter:

1. He did that—
2. The harvest—
3. For unto this—
4. By the rivers—
5. Wherewithal shall—
6. Our God whom—
7. Thou art—
8. They praised—
9. Give us help—
10. So they—
11. So I will—
12. Behold I—

Lesson I.—Who did right? King Josiah. What did he do in the twelfth year of his reign? He opened and repaired the house of the Lord. With what did God bless him? With peace and prosperity.

Lesson II.—Why were the people not saved? Because they refused to turn to the Lord. What did Jeremiah declare unto them? The desolation of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people.

Lesson III.—Who obeyed their father's commandment? The Rechabites. For what did the Lord reward them? For obedience to their father's law. For what did he punish the Israelites? For disobedience to the laws he had given them.

Lesson IV.—Who carried the Israelites as slaves to Babylon? King Nebuchadnezzar. What did he destroy? Jerusalem

and the holy temple. Why did sorrow trouble come upon them? Because they bowed down to idols.

Lesson V.—Who among the Jew captives lived in the king's palace Babylon? Daniel. What did Daniel resolve in his heart? To obey the law of God. What did he ask of the king's ruler? That he might have pulse and water to eat and drink. Why did he do this? The Jewish law forbade them to eat of meat killed by heathen. With what did God bless Daniel? With wisdom and learning.

Lesson VI. Who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. What did they do? He had them cast into the fiery furnace. Who was with them in the fire? The Son of God. From what did he save them? From being harmed by the flames.

Lesson VII.—What king made a great feast for his lords? Belshazzar. What frightened him in the midst of the feast? A hand writing on the wall. Who interpreted the strange words? Daniel. What did they mean? That God had taken the kingdom from him.

Lesson VIII.—Who helped the Jews go back to their own land? King Cyrus. What did they rebuild? The house of the Lord. Who rejoiced when the foundations were laid? The people. Who wept? The priests and the old men. For what did they weep? For the lost glory of the temple.

Lesson IX.—What news came to Nehemiah? That the Jews were poor and despised. What was the state of Jerusalem? It was without walls or gates. What did Nehemiah do? He prayed to the Lord for help. What did he ask God to remember? His promise to Moses.

Lesson X.—Who read the law of God to the people? Ezra and the priests. Why did the people weep? Because of their sins. Why did Ezra tell them to rejoice? Because God had forgiven them.

Lesson XI.—Who condemned all Jews to be killed? The king of Persia. Who saved their lives? Esther, his queen. What did she risk in so doing? Her own life.

Lesson XII.—Who was the messenger of the Lord? John the Baptist. What is Jesus called? The Sun of righteousness. What is the life without him? Cold and dark and dead.

MIND your ears, that they listen not to tale-bearing, evil speaking, or any ill report.