

## Youth's Department.

## BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, November 27th, 1864.

Read—LUKE xi. 1-13: Prayer. 1 SAMUEL xxv. 18-31: Abigail's entreaty with David.

Recite—HABAKUK ii. 18-20.

Sunday, December 4th, 1864.

Read—LUKE xi. 14-26: The dumb speak. 1 SAMUEL xxv. 32-44: Abigail becomes David's wife.

Recite—JOHN xvii. 24-26.

## BUSTER AND BABY JIM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BLUE FLAG," ETC.

"With God all things are possible."

## CHAPTER XI. THE TEMPTED.

Mr. Jillard had been selling some of his fine cattle. He had been paid in gold. Buster had seen the money counted out on the kitchen-table. He knew where it was locked up for safe keeping. He knew where the key of the corner cupboard was hidden in a tea-cup on a high shelf in the pantry. Sad, sad knowledge for Buster. Why was it that it haunted him after he lay down to sleep? Why did the glimmer of the gold continually glitter before his eyes? He jumped up and thrust his head out into the cool air to calm his fevered brain. He but saw how low was the window, how easy to jump from it and be far away before the morning light. With that bag of gold, what might he not do for Baby Jim? Once his own master, he would take charge of his little brother, and teach him to lead an honest Christian life.

So whispered the tempter, and Buster listened, listened till in fancy he had the treasure in his hands and was speeding over the field with his ill-gotten gains. The sins of his youth had risen up to claim Buster as their victim. Would he fall?

Ah, there was One stronger than the great adversary on the side of the tempted boy.

There was a power mightier than the force of old habits, or the deceitful allurements of doing evil that good might come. One who had suffered being tempted, was able to succor him when he was tempted. He had a High-priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and he therefore dared to come boldly to the throne of grace to find help in his time of need.

Buster turned quickly from the window and threw himself upon his knees. "God be merciful to me a sinner. Christ save me. Help, or I perish," he cried in the anguish of his spirit.

Deep and sincere was his repentance for having allowed his mind to be sullied even for a moment by such guilty thoughts. Now for the first time he realized how great had been his want of faith in feeling that he must take charge of his brother in person, or else all would go wrong. He saw that safer far would be Baby Jim in the keeping of a merciful Saviour, than under the most watchful care of his weak and tempted brother. To that Saviour he now committed him in perfect trust. Having cast his care on Him who is ready to bear all our burdens, Buster lay down to sleep, more calm and hopeful than he had been for many a long day.

## CHAPTER XII. BUSINESS IN TOWN.

Buster was roused the next morning at an early hour by an unusual stir in the house. Mrs. Jillard might be heard flying hither and thither, and there was a lumbering sound, as of heavy articles being moved, while the farmer and his wife were deep in earnest conversation.

"Now, Buster, up with you, and be down as quick as you can," said Mr. Jillard's voice at the foot of the stairs. "We must be off for town as soon as we can. I have business to do there, and shall want you with me."

Buster was not to go on horseback this day. Mr. Jillard's long wagon was put in requisition for the trip, and Buster was promised the pleasure of driving a pair for the first time in his life. The bag of gold was brought out, and Buster soon concluded that to deposit this treasure in the bank was the object of the trip. Mrs. Jillard favored her good husband with many parting injunctions, such as, "Be careful. Remember you are not a woman." This last caution Buster could not help thinking was particularly inappropriate, when he remembered how easy it had been to rob a certain honest woman on her first trip to the city.

It was no temptation to Buster now to see the bag of gold counted over once more before his eyes. He did not covet one single dollar of it. He was thankful that the miserable suggestions of the conquered enemy were not again present to his mind. He had placed his little brother in the care of One who can command the riches of the earth for his wise purposes, and make even kings do his bidding.

Mrs. Jillard at the last moment came staggering under the burden of a monstrous bundle, which she rolled in on the clean straw in the wagon.

Buster wondered much what it could contain, but he asked no questions, sure that Mr. Jillard would only give him a mysterious joking answer. Hicks Jillard did not like to have even his Mrs. Jillard too curious as to his plans and projects.

Straight to the bank drove the farmer, as soon as he entered the town. When the money was deposited, he turned his horses' heads towards the railroad depot, and then stood anxiously awaiting the arrival of the train.

"Company coming to our house?" Buster ventured to inquire.

"May-be," was the laconic answer.

There was the welcome whistle at last, then the black locomotive was seen far down the narrow valley through which the road was built. Hicks Jillard jumped into the wagon, untied the bundle and arranged some pillows and bed-quilts to his satisfaction, and then was down again in a moment, so as to be at his place when the train fairly stopped.

Anxiously he passed his eye along the line of cars; at length he seemed to see the object he desired. At a side-door a strong man appeared carrying a crippled boy. Buster needed no prompting now. He sprang to receive the precious burden in his arms, exclaiming, "Baby Jim! I should have known him anywhere."

The poor little fellow dropped his head upon Buster's shoulder, and cried like a baby.

"You know me, do n't you? You know Buster? You ha'n't forgot me?" said the big brother in appealing tones.

"All right," murmured little Jim, clinging the closer to the stout arms that held him.

"Here, lay him in here. I've got it all ready," said Mr. Jillard, moving towards the wagon. "I thought you'd like the job I had for you, Buster."

The meeting of the brothers had been worth more to Hicks Jillard than the bag of gold he had laid by that morning. He charged his memory to store away a perfect picture of it for Mrs. Jillard.

Baby Jim did not want to lie on that good soft bed. He liked best to be held firmly by the only being in the wide world who had ever loved him. It was not until he was in a sound sleep that his head was gently placed on the pillow, and he was covered up as carefully as if he were the heir apparent of a throne.

Buster had no words in which to thank Mr. Jillard for his kindness, though he vainly tried to express the deep gratitude he felt.

"Do n't say a word, boy," said the honest farmer; "I meant it from the first, but I did n't dare to tell you, for fear it could n't be. I was n't sure he could be moved, or there'd be any body to bring him. The Asylum folks, however, stick at nothing that's for the good of the boys. God bless them."

"You'll have a blessing too, sir, that's sure," said Buster warmly.

"I hav' n't done any thing. It was more Mrs. Jillard. She's hankered after that little chap ever since she heard about him. She's an idea that her Dolly's sweet milk will fetch him up, and straighten him out; and I do n't know but she thinks his arm will grow right on again, if she once gets the care of him. The night she talked about it to me, and planned over it! Why, she's got a mattress all fixed up for the settee in the kitchen, and she means to have him there all day, where she can look after him, she says. A'n't she a woman, now?"

"And to think she lets me call her mother! I wish I might be a right son to her," said Buster.

"And you will. And so will he too. He'll serve her for a daughter in the house, where she can see him all the time and have somebody to talk to. My Mrs. Jillard likes a good listener," said Hicks, with a funny quirk of his mouth.

Buster thought of his moment of temptation the night before, the terrible struggle that had sent him trembling to his knees. Ah, if he had yielded, where now would have been the cheerful prospect that was opening before him? What sorrow and disappointment he would have brought upon the friends who had so kindly sheltered him. How sure would have been his own utter falling back into wickedness and misery.

With devout thanksgiving, Buster silently praised the God who had watched over him in his hour of peril, and brought him off conqueror, though the enemy of souls had striven to drag him down to eternal death.

## CHAPTER XIII. CONCLUSION.

Suffering and weakness made Baby Jim seem even smaller and younger to his brother's eyes than when they parted. Rough companions and hard usage had been his lot since then. His life had been risked as of little value, where older villains would not willingly trust their own necks. No ledge along a house was thought too narrow for him to find a footing, no trellis too slender for him to climb. He was told that if he fell, there would be nobody to cry; and if he succeeded, a golden reward was promised him, still promised him, though as yet he had barely daily bread. While Buster was at his side, even grown men would not so have treated Baby Jim. The boy knew it, and often and longingly had his thoughts turned towards the lost companion of his childhood. Baby Jim had found the way of transgressors hard indeed, with few rays of sunshine to cheer the dreary path.

Now he was to be nursed and petted as if he were some precious thing. He had fallen among God's true children, who count every sufferer as the peculiar charge of Christ, to be loved and cared for as if sent by the Crucified himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," were heart-appreciated words to Mr. and Mrs. Jillard, and they rejoiced that a way was yet left them of ministering to His necessities, who while on earth had not where to lay his sacred head.

All day long Baby Jim would lie quietly on his easy couch, taking a sort of reflected comfort from Mrs. Jillard's kind, cheerful face; but when the farmer and Buster came into the kitchen, he claimed a little more attention. He raised himself at once to be taken into Buster's arms, where he chiefly loved to find himself; and

it was thus that he took his place at the table, where the tenderest morsels and the fairest fruit were always selected for him.

For Mr. Jillard's quizzical smile and playful greeting Baby Jim had a quiet twinkle of the eye, that told the farmer's fun was welcome, though it won no spoken response.

Jim gained slowly but constantly in bodily strength, though as yet he gave no sign of that true, inward progress which was most at his brothers' heart. When approached on religious subjects, he was pertinaciously silent, and Buster at length despairingly said to Mr. Jillard, "I do n't believe he'll ever come right. I am all discouraged about him." Mr. Jillard's reply was prompt and plain. "You do act, Buster, as if you had to be on the ridge-pole, or else the house would blow down. You've got nothing to do with making Jim a Christian. You've asked the Lord to do it, and are sure he'll bear you; but it will be in His time and way. What more do you want? Here your brother has all day long a Christian woman to watch; where will you find her equal? He sees the working of the thing. Then the Bible is read in his ears every morning, and our prayers are going up for him, where he can't help but hear them. You and I must do what we can by way of making our religion show it is the real thing in us, and that will be sure to tell. I do n't mind your now and then trying to persuade him; that is all natural and right, if you believe you are on the true track; but do n't keep at him all the time. Do your duty and trust the Lord. The sun do n't dart up like a shooting star; the wheat do n't make the air whiz with its fast growing. The best works go on slowly. I've great hopes for that boy. He's been brought through a great deal, and I believe there's a white robe for him and a place in the many mansions, though we can't see it yet."

Buster profited by Mr. Jillard's plain talking. He remembered the Baby Jim of old—keen and cautious, slow to come to a conclusion; but once fixed, not to be easily turned from his purpose. He could not expect, in one so differently constituted, the same religious experience he had himself passed through. He would pray, and be patient. Yet when Buster felt Baby Jim's clinging arms around him, and saw the small face looking up lovingly to his, in his heart he yearned to have his brother seek the Saviour's bosom, and look up to the eyes which "closed in death to save him." Such yearnings are in themselves of the nature of the truest prayer, the soul appealing to the present God for the choicest blessings for its dear ones.

Through the long winter Baby Jim was but as a tender house-plant, needing the most unwearied care and attention; but as the breath of spring touched the trees and flowers, he too seemed to revive. His eyes grew brighter, and a new strength awoke in his young frame. When Mrs. Jillard's boasted hyacinths were in blossom on the sunny side of the house, little Jim was able to get out to look at them, and as he lingered on the door-step the very pride of them all was placed in his hands. There he sat looking at the rows of tall, pink-tinted blossoms, while Mrs. Jillard glanced from him to the flower, her eye falling on them both with equal satisfaction.

"I'm not pretty, like it," said Baby Jim, expressing involuntarily his feeling of wonder that Mrs. Jillard should gaze so lovingly at him.

The poor, bent, crippled boy, with his pale, thin, old-looking face, was in truth very unlike the pure sweet flower in its perfection of beauty.

"You dear fellow, it does my heart good to see you out in the fresh air once more," said Mrs. Jillard, and she sat down beside Baby Jim and put her kind motherly arm about him.

Jim leaned against her as he whispered, "I a'n't fit to live here with you, after where I've lived, and what I've seen, and done myself too. I a'n't like this," and he pointed again at the flower.

"It grew up out of the dark, dirty ground. God made it so sweet and beautiful, and I do n't mind if it has an ugly old root all covered up in the earth. I do n't care where my Jimmy has lived. I love him, and I think God is making him one of his own dear children. Is n't it so, Jimmy? Tell your mother."

Baby Jim pressed his one hand against Mrs. Jillard's, and slowly bowed his head two or three times. She kissed him a fond loving kiss as she murmured, "Bless you, dear, God bless you."

Baby Jim rose up slowly, and moved in his unsteady way round the corner of the house. Mrs. Jillard did not follow him. He could go about safely by himself now, though he never strayed far from the kind face that had beamed so cheerily upon him through the long winter.

Mrs. Jillard's clean parlor was rarely opened. The green paper curtains shut out the light, and within all was neatness and darkness. At the side windows the lilac bushes held their undisturbed reign. They had grown until they nearly reached the roof, and in the centre of the cluster of bushes was a shaded spot which Mrs. Jillard thought only visited by the robins who had their nests in the shrubbery. Other feet however found their way to this hidden retreat, for hither Baby Jim quietly crept. He pushed his way through the outside undergrowth, and then was lost from sight.

"Mother," said Buster coming quickly up to Mrs. Jillard, who was still busy among her flowers, "Mother, father wants his new knife. He has broken his old one."

"Go into the parlor and get it, my boy; it is in the little chimney cupboard, on the left-hand side."

Buster fumbled about in the dark room then stepped to the window to give himself more light. Sunshine and joy indeed burst upon him such joy as angels know in heaven. There in his chosen retreat knelt Baby Jim, his face up-

lifted with the sweet, loving, tender look in it which Buster knew so well.

From the depths of his softened heart little Jim was thanking the Lord who had mercifully brought him to such a home, and praying that he might be made worthy of the loving care bestowed upon him.

Buster mechanically snatched the knife, and then quickly left the room. In another moment a strong arm was round little Jim, and the brothers knelt side by side. It was Buster's voice that spoke the deep gratitude of his soul as he drew the "lost and found" still closer to his side.

Buster could not linger, duty called him away. Fast over the fields he was soon speeding with a springing, joyous step, and forth on the air sounded his hymn of praise:

"For good is the Lord, inexpressibly good,  
And we are the work of his hand;  
His mercy and truth from eternity stood,  
And shall to eternity stand."

Love, true Christian love had sought the poor wandering wicked brothers, and brought them to the feet of Jesus.

And can the depraved children of the city be so reformed and made useful members of society—of the communion of Christ's church on earth, and of the redeemed in heaven? The Holy Spirit of power can wash away the darkest stains, and purify the foulest heart. "With God all things are possible." But has this great and wonderful work ever been accomplished? Go ask the benevolent men who labor for such institutions as we have described, and hear their cheering reply. Yes, blessed be God, many such wanderers have been reclaimed: some are adorning earthly homes: some, we trust, are shining in heaven.

The eternal mansions are opened wide, the Master's feast is ready. To us comes the message, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor—that my house may be filled."

## The harp in Heaven.

One of the sweetest recollections of my girlhood is a beautiful reply my mother once made me, when my heart was swelling with childish grief.

I had just returned from the house of a wealthy neighbor, who had kindly given me the use of their piano for a few hours every day, to gratify my extreme love for music. Our own cottage home looked so plain in contrast with the one I had just left, and no piano within its walls, I laid my head upon the table and gave vent to my overflowing heart. I felt grieved, and perhaps a little angry, that we were unable to afford the one thing I desired above all others—a piano—and expressed my feelings to my mother.

Never shall I forget her sweet, gentle tone, as she simply replied, "Never mind, daughter, if you cannot have a piano on earth, you may have a harp in heaven." Instantly the whole current of my feelings was changed. Earthly things dwindled into insignificance, and the "harp in heaven," with its golden strings, became the object of my desire. I felt reprieved for my repinings against the Providence that had placed me in a humble home, and from that moment the enjoyment of heaven seemed far to outweigh all the pleasures of earth. That beautiful reply has followed me all my life, or rather, has gone before me like a bright guiding star—lifting my thoughts above this transient life, and opening to my spirit's vision the glorious scenes in that "land of life and light." I have a "piano on earth" now, but its charm is gone. Its music no longer gladdens my heart as it once did, for the ears that loved best to listen to its sweet tones are now enraptured with the grand harmonies of heaven. The dear fingers that so often touched its keys, now sweep the golden harp strings. O, that "harp in heaven!" How my soul longs for one breath of its rich melody!

As I look upon the dear baby fingers in the cradle near me, I think it matters little whether my child be poor or rich—whether her path be strewn with thorns or flowers—if she may only have a "harp in heaven."

## The power of Books.

Henry Ward Beecher, in a recent address on "The Religious Literature needed for the Future," paid an eloquent tribute to the permanent power of books, in contrast with the power of living men, which is transitory:

Men die—books don't. Men have the bronchitis—books don't. Men have the dyspepsia—books don't! I wish some of them did! Men grow weary—books don't. A man, having worn out his genius, can never be reproduced. He lives for his time, but that is the end of him. The series begins and ends with one. But if a book wears out, stereotype plates can make another just like it, or a thousand just like it. You can multiply that book-man a million times, and send him all over the world, to speak in a thousand languages. He never grows tired. If you burn him, he has a brother to take his place. The unmartyrable books have great advantages over the frail living speaker, while the speaker, in enthusiasm and present power, has a great advantage over books. We need more of both.

We need more preachers of the Gospel—professional and lay preachers; but we need, more than we ever did before, the silent preaching of the page—the preaching of a Christian literature; and it is for this very purpose that such associations as this are formed—to spread it, and, by spreading it, indirectly stimulate the production of it.

We have nothing that we can properly call our own, but what we have reason to be ashamed of.