



SUNDAY READING

hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me.
Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and My sister.

Let Us Pray.

O God, our Heavenly Father, though we do often forget Thee, Thou dost never forget us. Pardon our forgetfulness, and help us now with quiet minds and grateful hearts to remember Thee. Hear our prayers, and accept our hymns of praise. May we be made wiser and better by the good words to which we shall listen. May we be drawn to Jesus by the cords of love, and, like Him, seek to please Thee in all things. May we ever try to be good and to do good; to do all that we can that Thy kingdom of purity, and truth, and love may come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

HYMN.

Come to Me.

God who hath made the daisies,
And every lovely thing,
He will accept our praises,
And hearken while we sing.
He says, though we are simple,
Though ignorant we be,
"Suffer the little children,
And let them come to Me."

Though we are young and simple,
In praise we may be bold;
The children in the temple,
He heard in days of old;
And if our hearts are humble,
He says to you and me,
"Suffer the little children,
And let them come to Me."

Therefore, we will come near Him,
And solemnly we'll sing:
No cause to shrink or fear Him,
We'll make our voices ring;
For in our temple speaking,
He says to you and me,
"Suffer the little children,
And let them come to Me."

Scripture Lesson.

St. John, Chapter ix., 1st to 12th verse.

And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth.
And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spit, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

And He said unto him, go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

Some said, This is he; others said, he is like him; but he said, I am he.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

He answered and said, A Man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not.

Prayer.

Our Father in Heaven, look down upon us, Thy little children, and help us to worship Thee. Put out of our minds all foolish thoughts. Teach us Thy will concerning us, and incline us to learn. May we love Thy truth and seek to live by it every day.

Our Father, we know that Thou dost hear us when we pray. The sound of voices which no man can number is ever in Thine ear; but each voice is heard by Thee, cared for by Thee, interpreted by Thee; and Thou missest not the cry of a little child.

Our Father, we know that we need have no fear of Thee. Though we are often very bad, yet we know that Thou lovest us even in our sins, and art always trying to make us better. Thy thoughts towards us are full of pity and tender love. Thou hast spoken to us by the sweet and gentle voice of Jesus, and He has told us that Thou art kinder than the kindest, better than the best, and that there is ever room in Thy heart and in Thy home for the little ones of Thy making and loving.

Our Father, we thank Thee for all the good and beautiful things we find in and around our life. Thou art very kind to us; and Thy gentleness makes us great. For food and raiment; for the love of parents and friends; for our work and play; for our school and books; for the Sunday and its worship and teaching; and for all Thy tender mercies, we thank Thee.

Our Father, help us to show our thankfulness for the merciful and unwearied care by ever seeking to please Thee in all things. Help us to fight against our faults, that they may not grow into bad habits which will cling to us all our days. May we always speak the truth and never be guilty of deceit. May we be kind and gentle, and not easily angered. May we never neglect our duties, but always learn our lessons and do all our work as in Thy sight and for Thee. May we think little about ourselves, but ever strive to do what we can for others, and to hurt no one by word or by deed. Thy beauty shines in cloud and flower. Oh, let it shine in our lives—that beauty of Thine which is only beautiful. May we grow more like Jesus every day we live, and become children with whom Thou art ever well pleased, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HYMN.

My Life.

God make my life a little light,
Within the world to glow;
A little flame that burneth bright,
Wherever I go.

God make my life a little flower,
That giveth joy to all;
Content to bloom in native bowers,
Although its place be small.

God make my life a little song,
That comforteth the sad;
That helpeth others to be strong,
And makes the singer glad.

God make my life a little staff,
Whereon the weak may rest,

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That so what health and strength I have
May serve my neighbors best.

God make my life a little hymn
Of tenderness and praise;
Of faith—that never waxeth dim,
In all His wondrous ways.

—M. B. Edwards.

SERMON.

Little Jack Horner—By Rev. John Paul Ritchie, of Leeds.

"Little Jack Horner
Sat in a corner,
Eating his Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb
And pulled out a plum,
And said, 'What a good boy am I!'"

It would serve no profitable purpose to discuss the age or authorship of these immortal lines. They were evidently written some time after Christianity had taken a firm hold of the heart and stomach of old England.

They suggest a doubt as to the genuineness of much of the piety that has been professed, both in our own time and also in the days of our "pious ancestors;" and it is, therefore, necessary to examine the foundations of professions such as that made by Jack Horner.

We shall notice in this rhyme—

I. The person mentioned—little Jack Horner.

Beyond the fact that he was little, we know little about Jack Horner. We may gather that he was an English boy—not Scotch or Irish—from his English pet-name Jack, from his speech, and from the fact that he had a Christmas pie.

He was a son of old Horner—a chip of the old block, for, as we shall presently see, he had a natural aptitude for horn-blowing.

But what we have particularly to note is the fact that he was little, not only in body but in soul.

Now it is well known that little men have generally a very tall opinion of themselves. As a rule, this is noticeable in the bearing of men who are of small bodily dimensions. It is very difficult to get them to acknowledge their true height. They will stoop to save their hats, although they may not be within a foot of any danger of collision.

They are ever liable to depreciation on account of their deficiency of bodily presence, and the constant struggle to assert themselves, tends to beget in them a mounting disposition, which is not, in many cases, under subjection to such a worthy motive as that which led Zaccheus the Publican to climb up into the sycamore tree, appearing often as a "vaulting ambition" to ride some high horse.

Thus it happens that while men of lofty stature are usually of a lowly mind, little men are mostly of a bumptious, self-asserting disposition. It is in this way that nature keeps her balance.

But it is not a safe principle to estimate character by superficial bodily measurement. By such measurement it might be said of many a great strong soul, as Shakespeare makes the Countess of Auvergne say of "English John Talbot:"

"Alas! this is a child, a silly dwarf;
It cannot be this weak and withered shrimp
Should strike such terror to his enemies."

But, looking at the spirit level, it will be found that a man is little inwardly in proportion to the measure of his self-satisfaction.

It is a little soul that boasts of its own merits. The great soul, ever conscious of a higher greatness and glory than it has yet attained, and mindful that it has nothing which it has not received, habitually maintains the attitude of true humility. The measure of our genuine humility is the true standard of our spiritual greatness. When we take "airs" in order to assert our capabilities, we only make the smallness of our nature manifest, like the frog in the fable, that strove, by means of puffing, to attain the size of the ox.

We shall find that Jack Horner was little, not only "according to the flesh," but likewise "after the spirit."

II. His position—"he sat in a corner." Now, the question naturally suggests itself: Why did he sit in a corner? Why does any one sit in a corner?

There are quiet, unassuming people who sit in corners to escape from public notice. They have no desire for fame. They do not wish to see their names in the columns of newspapers, or "loud" reports, or "swell" subscription lists. They do not seek their reward by the sound of a trumpet when they give their alms. They like to stand inside the angles of the corners at which they pray, not outside of them as they who "love to pray standing in the synagogues, and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." Striving, unobserved to fulfil their appointed day's work in their own corners of the Master's field, the lives of these unheard-of people are the strength and glory of a nation—the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof; and their Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward them openly.

But there is another class of people who get into corners. Swindlers get into corners when they hatch their fraudulent devices; thieves get into corners to examine and divide their plunder; slanderers get into corners to spit their venom on fair names and reputations; and selfish people get into corners to enjoy their good things by themselves. These are the black hole and corner denizens.

Now to which of these two classes, let us ask, did Jack Horner belong? We shall, perhaps, be in a better position to answer the question when we consider.

III. His occupation, "He sat in a corner, eating his Christmas pie." It appears that he was in the undisturbed possession of a whole Christmas pie. Most likely he was an only child petted and spoiled by the foolish fondness of indulgent parents.

Why did he not sit at the table and eat his pie like a gentleman? Doubtless because he would not be allowed to over-eat himself there, as was evidently his intention; so he went into the corner that he might gorge himself without restraint or hindrance. And, observe, how he had broken through all the established principles of

table etiquette, and fallen back upon the barbarous rule of thumb—

"He put in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum."

In view of such base manners, how can we admire Jack Horner? The object which led him into the corner reveals his selfishness and gluttonous greed.

Yet observe—

IV. His good opinion of himself, "He said what a good boy am I."

If no one else thought much of him, he had a very high opinion of himself. If no one else would sound his praise, he was quite proficient in the blowing of his own horn.

But it is this horn-blowing that reveals his inward littleness. Supposing he was not a very bad boy, what business had he to be confident of his own moral excellence? He should have left it to others to discover and proclaim his goodness to the world. But he must have thought that if he did so, his virtue would be doomed to

"Blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

And so he at once determined to be the trumpeter of his own praise. "He said what a good boy am I!"

Now, a moment's reflection will suffice to show that they who are so confident of their own goodness must be in a hopelessly bad way. For self-satisfaction involves the stoppage of all true moral progress. The soul that is satisfied with its attainments cannot possibly grow in grace. It must remain for ever small.

The sense of want is the well-spring of all divine attainment. The discernment of wrongness is the motive principle of progress in the way of righteousness. In the eye that sees deficiency the way towards proficiency is mirrored. It is when we stand in our own light that we perceive no evil in ourselves. It is when the truth is not in us that we are unconscious of our errors. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The entrance of the truth makes us all too aware of our shortcomings to leave us with any disposition to say—"What a good boy am I." The development of the spirit of self-satisfaction is, therefore, an indication of the stoppage of all spiritual growth. To be full of oneself is to be an empty vessel.

The apostle Paul, in view of the responsibilities under which he was placed by the greatness of his spiritual privileges, declared himself to be the chief of sinners; but how many small-minded pietists of the Horner type imagine that they have seen the end of all perfection, and arrived at it. The great soul speaks on this wise: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, . . . but forgetting these things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark." But the little soul vaunts itself after the manner of Jack Horner, who said, "What a good boy am I."

Alas! What a host of little Jack Horners there are in the world—people who think themselves so good that they do not realize the possibility of becoming any better. They feed their vanity upon their piety. The way of Jack Horner's goodness was in himself. He felt very pious after he had stuffed himself with pie. And how many people imagine that they have more goodness than others because they happen to have more goods. They estimate their moral worth by their money worth: they are "good" for so much.

But, happily, the recording angel does not estimate our piety by the superficial measurement of our pie crust.

Ah, friends, it is very easy to feel pious with plenty of pie. It is not so easy to be pious on an empty stomach. How many little hands would be kept from picking and stealing if they could readily come at pie in an honest way. The duties of policemen would be less arduous if there were no barriers in the way of the attainment of pie.

When we feel the Horner spirit rising in us, prompting us to think ourselves righteous and to despise others, let us reflect how largely our piety may be dependent upon pie; and how much of the impiety prevalent in society around us may be attributable to the want of pie. Let us ever remember that the sins which we condemn in others might have been our sins if we had experienced the temptations to which others have succumbed. Let us pray that we may not be led into temptation, but never boast of our virtue in the spirit of Jack Horner, who said, "What a good boy am I."

The piety that is so conscious of itself knows nothing of the "charity which suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." The self-righteous have to keep themselves in the conceit of their superior merit by passing harsh, uncharitable judgments upon others. When the Horn-blower is not sounding his trumpet before him, you may be certain he is using it as an ear-trumpet, wherewith to take up ill reports against his neighbours.

The way of wisdom is a way of peace, undisturbed by the blowing of horns. "The way of a man is not in himself;" but his true way is the way of self-forgetfulness and self-denial.

Instead of thinking ourselves righteous and despising others, let us, then, be ever ready to spend and be spent for the good of others, that so our piety may not be a mere pretence, but a real living power, from which the world around us may derive some good.

Hymn.

God bless the little children
The faces sweet and fair,
The bright young eyes so strangely wise,
The bonny silken hair.

God love the little children,
The angels at the door;
The music sweet of little feet
That patter on the floor.

God help the little children,
Who cheer our saddest hours,
And shame our fears for future years,
And give us winter flowers.

God keep the little children,
Whom we no more can see:

Fled from their nest and gone to rest,
Where we desire to be.

—J. P. Hopps.

Our Heavenly Father, may the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to Thee. We leave this place, but we can not go away from Thee: we part from each other, but from Thee we cannot part. Thy presence is ever with us; and we are ever in Thy merciful and faithful care. Help us ever to live as children of the light; upright, simple, pure, free from all evil, just and kind to

all. May we ever hear our Shepherd's voice, and follow Him always and in all things that the life we live here on earth may be full of blessing to Thy children, and that we may love and serve Thee in joy and peace for ever.

Benediction.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace, both now and for ever.



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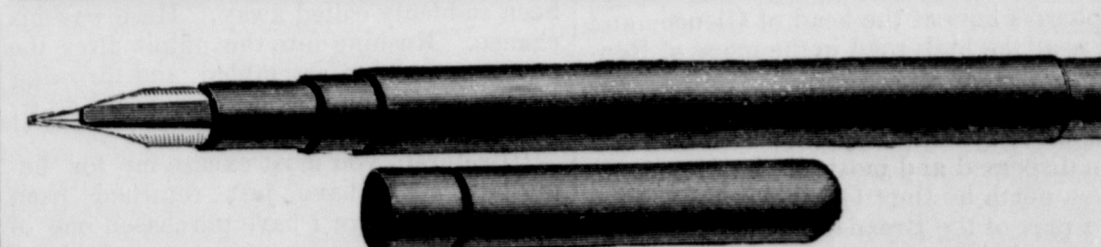
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BIBLE QUESTION COMPETITION.

This competition is open to all the readers of PROGRESS, but is more especially intended to interest the young people—the boys and girls who are, or should be attending Sunday school. The following rules should be strictly observed:

RULES FOR COMPETITORS.

1. A prize of one dollar will be awarded every week for the first correct answer that reaches PROGRESS office. If there is no correct answer the person who sends the first best answer will receive the dollar. In case two correct answers reach the office at the same time the dating stamps of the post offices at which they are mailed will be taken into consideration.

2. Competitors must write on one side of the paper only, giving name and address in full with each answer. These need not be published except in the case of prize-winners and successful competitors.

3. The winner of a prize will not be eligible to compete for another for four weeks.

4. All replies must be received on or before Saturday one week after publication of the questions, thus allowing competitors a clear week for their efforts.

5. No post-cards can be received. All replies should be addressed to the "SUNDAY READING," EDITOR PROGRESS, St. John, N. B.

When reading over the answers to Prize Bible Questions. No. 9, I thought I had at last puzzled PROGRESS' reading boys and girls, as envelope after envelope was opened, and still the same answer to the fourth question. "Paul was sorry he saw so long, rather than he was blind so soon; because after his conversion, when he looked back on the time when he had persecuted the church, he would rightly wish that he had been struck with blindness sooner, so that he would have so much less time of persecuting the Christians to repent of."—Acts ix. This and many other answers I consider very good, denoting care and thought in bible study. When I opened Miss Annie Watson's (Fredericton) envelope, I got the correct answer so very beautifully and fully given that I at once named her the successful competitor, and thought she must stand alone, as the only one who had answered No. 9 questions correctly. As my search for correct answers continued, I found two others to place with her as having answered the fourth question—Master C. Goddreg, P. Newnam, St. Stephen, who always gives such admirable answers, concise, and in his own language. The third correct answer was from a new competitor, Miss Nellie M. Flewelling, Centreville, who, stimulated by her brother's success, also tried and succeeded in finding the correct answers.

As the answer to the fourth question is given so graphically by Miss Annie Watson, I will not make any comment upon it, but hope that all will be encouraged by the successful ones to persevere and continue in well doing, and they also will one day be rewarded with success. NEANI.

Answers to Prize Bible Questions. No. 9.

1. What things are related to show the severity of the famine during the siege of Samaria? and where foretold?

Ans. To show the severity of the famine in Samaria during the siege, it is said in 2 Kings v: 25-29. That the people ate the flesh of asses, and a kind of pulse or peas called dove's dung which is very common in Judea; a cab is a measure containing almost a quart, one fourth of a cab was sold for five pieces of silver, about two and a half dollars; but the most shocking part was that mothers cooked and ate their own children. It was foretold by Moses, Leviticus xxvi: 29, also Deuteronomy xxviii: 51-59.

2. State what you know about Ezion-gaber?

Ans. Ezion-gaber, which means backbone. It derives its name from a reef of rocks, is a city of Arabia, at the northern extremity of eastern or Atlantic gulf of the Red sea, and close by Elath. It was here that Solomon fitted out his fleets for the voyage to Ophir, 1 Kings ix, 26. It was one of the camping places of the Israelites; Numbers xxxiii, 35. The ships of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, which were going to Ophir for gold were broken at Ezion-gaber, 1 Kings xxii, 28.

3. Give the name of a Corinthian chamberlain?

Ans.—Erastus was the name of a Corinthian chamberlain. Romans xvi, 23.

4. Of whom may it be said, he was sorry he saw so long rather than he was blind so soon?

Ans. It may be said of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was sorry he saw so long when he saw his children put to death before his eyes, and then had his eyes put out. He was loaded with chains and carried to Babylon.—2 Kings xxv: 1-8. For full description, Jeremiah xxxix: 1-8.

"Sunday Reading," April 11.—Hiddekel, instead of Hiddelee; Uai, instead of Uias; Clebar, instead of as.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS.—No. 11.

1. What directions does Paul give as to our speech?

2. Where are we told of a man angry at God's mercy?

3. Who was the accuser and slayer of 85 priests?

4. What name was given to a race of giants by the Ammonites?

SERVICE FOR CHILDREN.

By Rev. John Hunter, of Glasgow.

Remember now Thy Creator in the days of Thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

Jesus said: Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.

I am the Good Shepherd, and My sheep