



THE
BIBLE SWEETMEAT,
THE RIDDLE.

—•••••—
And Other Stories.
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Samson and the Lion.

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THE BIBLE SWEETMEAT—THE RIDDLE.

JUDGES XIV.

HE Bible is such a wonderful book. Indeed we may say the most wonderful of all books. Have you ever been to one of our public libraries and looked round on the walls of shelves? Those shelves are filled with thousands of volumes, many of which have been written by good and learned men. Yet amongst the purest and best of them all, the Bible stands foremost.

And why is this, do you think?

Because it is God's own work. He

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caused holy men to write it ; therefore we may say it is His book.

One thing I must point out to you : the wisest men in the land and little children have learned from the Bible, in all ages since it was written ; while of men's books, some are written for the learned and others for the young ; but few indeed, in which all are interested.

Well, in the Bible, children may read of all kinds of things that they delight in, and I think they will see from this little paper, that it speaks even about the sweetmeat, and contains a riddle for them to guess the meaning of. •

A riddle you know, is a sentence or question that seems to present a contradiction, and we have to guess how to

reconcile the two or more points, whatever they may be.

If you were asked the name of the strongest man ever heard of, perhaps some of you would be able to tell me his name was Samson.

Well, Samson made a feast for his companions; there were thirty of them. The feast was not for one day only, but it was to last seven days. When at the feast, Samson said, "I will now put forth a riddle unto you;" and if his companions were able to guess its meaning within the days of the feast, then Samson said he would give them thirty sheets and thirty changes of raiment; but if they failed, then they must give Samson the same things.

His companions replied, "Put forth thy

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riddle that we may hear it ;” and this is what it was : “ Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.”

Now you must, like those Samson spoke to, try first and guess this riddle about sweetness and meat, or I may say, sweetmeat; but if you cannot think what it means, let me tell you the Bible answer to it: the lion was the strong eater, for you have all heard how powerful a lion is, the king of beasts; and the sweetmeat was the honey.

It was rather a puzzling riddle for them, because we never expect to get meat out of any animal that naturally devours every living thing within its reach, neither do we get sweetness and strength combined.

Six days of the seven had passed away, but as yet the young men could not think of the right answer to give Samson, and they were rather vexed to think that they would have to give up the attempt, and lay down at Samson's feet the things mentioned : but at last they determined to do by craft and subtilty what they were unable to accomplish by fair means. They went to Samson's wife and told her to entice her husband to reveal to her the secret that she might tell them ; they even threatened to burn her and her father's house if she refused.

The poor woman frightened at such language, went to Samson and told him he could not love her, or else he would not keep the riddle secret from her. Samson

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replied that he had not even told his father and mother, and could he therefore tell her? But she wept before him while the feast went on, especially on the last—the seventh day; till at last Samson told her, and she, to save her life as she thought, gave the meaning of it to the men of her people.

A most unworthy way of answering Samson, was it not? but these Philistine men did not mind that, if they could only save their goods.

Well, before the sun went down on the seventh day, the men of the city said unto him, “What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?”

Yes, that was the answer to the riddle, and this is how it was that Samson made it.

One day a lion met him, and such was his strength that, without anything in his hand, he caught hold of it, and killed it, and went on his way. After a time, he was returning along the same road, and went to look at the dead lion, and found that a swarm of bees had made their hive in its body, having stored a quantity of honey there, of which Samson ate.

Let me tell you as well, dear children, God always has some lesson to teach in what is written in the Bible, which is His word, so we must seek to find out what it is in this case for our souls. Christ is the Key to the Bible, so we must look for something about Him here. The strong lion is just like death, which preys upon everyone and everything around: strong

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men and women die, children die, animals die, birds die, fishes die, flowers fade and die, death is constantly crossing our path ; and, dear children, do not let us forget that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, not that He was subject to it, but He laid down His life ; and not only so, but as He was stronger than death, like Samson killing the lion, He rose out of it, having obtained a great victory over its power. And now there is blessing out of His death for any grown-up person, or boy, or girl, that simply believes in His name, who shall then taste indeed the true meat and sweetness provided for the soul.

Many a one knows what it is to be enjoying Christ—more delicious to the soul

than any sweetmeat could ever be for the body.

Do *you*, dear reader? If not yet, why not now by simply believing on Him, as a poor sinner (for this indeed is what each one of us, without exception, is by nature in the sight of the holy God) and so be saved? (Acts xvi. 31). "O taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm xxxiv. 8).

J. S. C.



THE SEASIDE.

I WAS one day walking along the shingly beach at Rhyl, and many happy thoughts came into my mind about God and His love to me, as I gazed upon the wondrous works of His great power on every side. Amid the grandeur and greatness of His works, I seemed but as a tiny grain of sand, so small and so insignificant, and yet in His loving-kindness He had not passed me by, but had told me about Jesus, and who He was, and why He was born into this world, and what He did upon the cross, to which



I saw the angry ocean.

man in wickedness had nailed Him. I loved to read in the Bible about Jesus, for there I had found how He loved me, and what He had done to save me, and therefore I am very happy, and though unknown to the grand people who were passing to and fro, He knew me, and loved me, and I could sing as I walked along the sea shore,

He spread the skies, and raised the hills—

The ocean tells His power—

Gave swiftness to the little rills,

And beauty to the flower.

He made those shining orbs which roll,

And everything I see;

But gave Himself to save my soul,

So great His love to me.

Before me was the great Irish Sea, stretched out without a break, until the sea and the clouds seemed to be in close

contact. In the distance were the great ships, laden with commerce, going out from Liverpool to various parts of the world, some, perhaps, carrying Bibles, to

Many a wild and fearless race
Who worship wood and stone;
That they might know the God of grace,
And worship Him alone.

On the left, at the farthest edge of the boundary, was the Great Ormes Head, raising its bold rocky form high above the surrounding cliffs, and standing far out in the ocean, against which the waves beat unceasingly—at times with a wild dash and angry roar; and at other times with a soft lulling murmur, as the waters moved lazily at its foot.

Behind was a background of no ordinary

beauty. Fields of corn, and meadows, enclosed with low edges of quickset, almost ready for the reaper to "thrust in his sickle," reminded me of the "husbandman,"

The seed is sown, the fields are till'd ;—
Through sunshine, wind, and rain,
He waits, until his barns are fill'd
With stores of ripen'd grain.

Here and there orchards and gardens enlivened the scene with their fruit trees and beds of flowers, and contrasted strangely with the stern mountains at the back which rose up grandly and solemnly, some towering so high that at times their heads were lost in the fleecy clouds which were hurrying on so fast upon their wondrous journey. Now and then I could

see the impatient and noisy little waterfall, and a tiny stream dashing on its wayward course down the sides of the rock, as though impatient to reach the great ocean, and scattering its silvery spray over the brown heather which clothes the mountain sides.

All this was to me a scene of loveliness, inasmuch as I saw in it the wisdom and the power of Him whom I knew as my Father (being a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus), and could say, "All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord ; and Thy saints shall bless Thee." In the creation I see the power of God ; but in the cross of Jesus, who died to save sinners, I learn His LOVE.

The Psalmist sings about creation—

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.—Psalm xix. 1.

O Lord! how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches:

So is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.—Psalm civ. 24–27.

Then again, I saw the angry ocean heaving up its great billows, and lashing the shore in its fury, and strewing the beach with seaweed and rubbish, torn and brought up from its depths. I thought of what the prophet Isaiah says of the wicked—

The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot get rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.—Isa. lvii. 20.

On the beach were groups of little merry-hearted children, very busy in building their houses of sand, which the waves (stealing onward, and then drawing back again, to rise with greater power) destroyed, swallowing up in a few moments the labour of hours, washing away the buildings upon which the little workmen had bestowed much pains. This called to my mind the words of Jesus, concerning those who do not believe on Him, and are spending their time and money to get happiness without Him, thinking of the bright days before them, when they shall be rich and grand, and have everything

their hearts could desire, that such hopes may be destroyed at any moment by sickness and death. Jesus says that all who are seeking their pleasure in this world are like the man who built his house upon the sand, and when the storm came it was all washed away, because it had no foundation ; and so He tells us to build upon a rock, which means to have a good foundation, so that what we build may not be destroyed. Jesus speaks of Himself as the rock, and those who believe in Him and His precious blood, as building for the present and future safety and blessing of their souls. They belong to Jesus, and all power in heaven and in earth is His, and He says He "will in no wise cast out," and that none can pluck them from His

hand. How happy he is who has fled to Jesus for refuge! always happy, and always confident, because the love of Christ knows no change, He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. How graciously God comes down to the understanding of a little child, when speaking about His great salvation, and His great love to the sinner! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) A VERY LITTLE CHILD can understand God's glad tidings, and when he does believe, his heart is filled with joy, and he goes on his way rejoicing.

Conversion is the result of believing the

gospel, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

It says in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

A child would sooner believe what its father or mother says than any one else in the world, and parents who love their children will not deceive them. A child learns to have confidence in them from its birth, and never calls their love in question.

A little boy woke up one night, and finding all was dark around him, was frightened, and began to cry, but his father heard him, and went to his bed-side, spoke a few soothing words to him and kissed him, when the little fears were all gone—it was all right—"Father was there!"

He saw no one, but he heard his father's voice, he felt his father's kiss, and he well knew that some one who loved him was looking after him and caring for him; his tears were dried up, and he soon sank to sleep again. His little heart was at rest, because the one who loved him was there.

And Jesus gives rest, when with the faith of a little child we believe in Him, and trust His loving care.

Perhaps my little reader has been by the sea, and if so, he may have seen it the day after a storm—so calm and quiet, not even a little ripple upon its surface, the sun shining brightly upon it, and the face of the ocean beautiful in its many tints, reminding one of that lovely passage in Rev. xv. 2; “a sea of glass mingled with

fire ;” and that fine description of the sea in its power and repose, in Psalm cvii. 23-30.

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters :

These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths! their soul is melted because of trouble.

They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they be quiet ; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

See that great ocean lately rolling in

fury, tossing its waves mountains high, and in its angry power dashing ships to pieces, now lying calm and peaceful as a babe at rest. Just as we might have seen that sea at rest when Jesus rose from His pillow, and spoke to the angry waves, bidding them to be still, and they were hushed in a moment.

And if the sea obeys His word, how much more should we do so! especially when we see how happy He desires to make us, and how much He wants to bless us, forgiving all our sins, and by His precious blood washing our souls "whiter than snow." His commandments are not grievous. His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace.

The wind was heard with angry note
To rush upon the deep,
It dash'd the waves upon the boat
Where Jesus lay asleep.
And as the storm still louder grew,
The men were in despair,
But in their terror little knew
Creation's Lord was there.
The little ship was tempest-tost
Upon the surging wave,
And fearing much they should be lost,
They cried to Him to save.
Then Jesus from His pillow rose,
And bade the winds be still,
And sinking into calm repose
The sea obey'd His will.
The winds that from the mountains rush'd,
The noisy tumult cease ;
The billows were to silence hush'd,
And all around was peace.

One day, hundreds of years ago, in the
sunny land of Judea, Jesus walked by the

D

sea of Galilee, and as He walked He saw two fishermen casting their nets into the sea—for they were fishers—and He said unto them, “Come ye after me,” and they obeyed His voice, left their nets, and followed Him; and walking a little farther, He saw two more fishermen, who were mending their nets, and He called them, and they too, obeyed His voice, and left all, and followed Him. (Mark i.)

What a seaside walk was that! and the One who walked there was a Saviour, seeking poor sinners, that they might be with Him in heavenly glory. He is the same Jesus, though now sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and is speaking to the hearts of poor sinners; and those who hear His voice, and believe

on Him, have eternal life. Has my young reader believed on Jesus? does he know what it is to be saved by the blood of Jesus? if so, he will be able to sing with God's people,

When the earth has fled away,
When there shall be no more sea,
In that bright eternal day,
Jesus, I shall be with Thee.

It is the word of God—the Bible—that makes people happy, when it is believed in by faith. It is only believers in Jesus that are truly happy.



EARLY SORROW.

ONCE, a child in sorrow,
 Weeping very sore,
 Went into his closet—
 Shutting to the door,
 Where no eye was watching,
 Save the eye above,
 Which is never weary
 Watching us in love.

He had heard that Jesus, up in heaven so high,
 Always stoop'd to listen to the feeble cry.

'I am very naughty,
 'And deserve the rod—
 'And I often tremble,
 'When I think of God.
 'I am very sorry—
 'Thou art very good—
 'Kind and loving Jesus,
 'Wash me in Thy blood.'

Thus the little fellow, kneeling down to pray,
Told his griefs to Jesus, in his simple way.

And the loving Jesus
Saw the falling tear,
And the wounded spirit,
Full of grief and fear.
And in words of comfort
Spake He to the boy,
In a still small whisper
Giving peace and joy,

Banishing his sorrow, soothing his distress,—
Little tiny children, Jesus loves to bless.

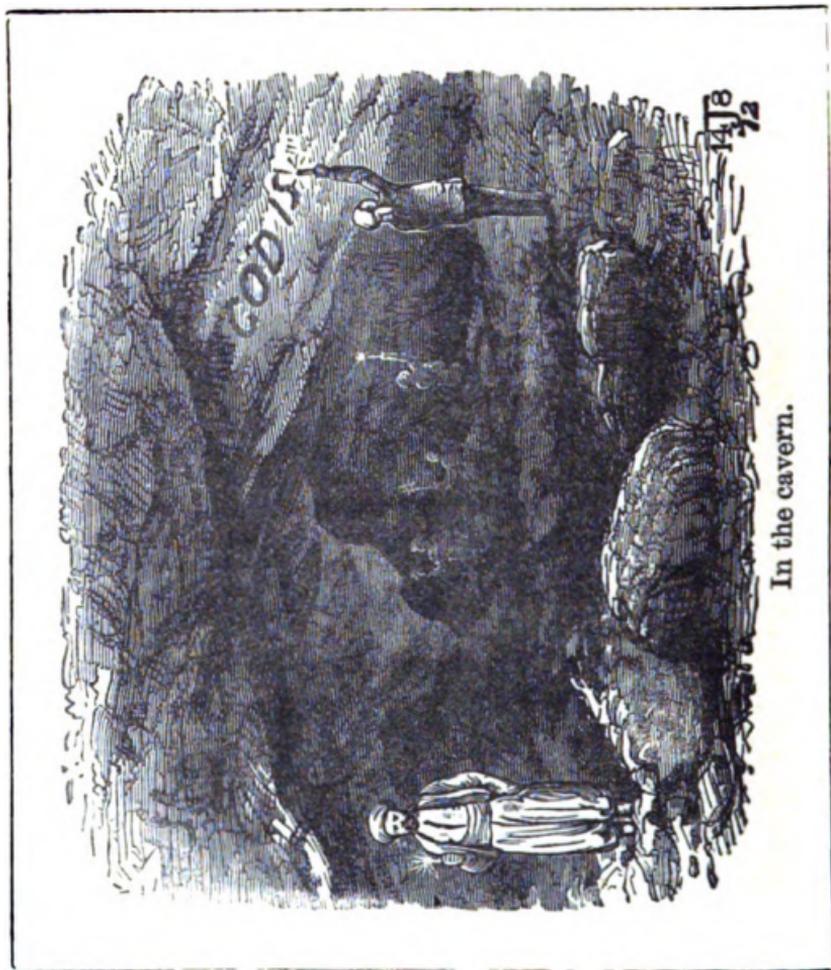
He had, in the Bible,
Read about the grace
Of the lowly Jesus,
Who had left His place
On the throne of glory,
Far above the sky,
And in love to sinners
Came down here to die;

But that He had risen, and in glory lives,
And to poor dead sinners life eternal gives.

Through the love of Jesus,
And the tidings heard—
He was saved, and happy,
Resting on His Word.
When he grew to manhood,
Often press'd by care,
Much he loved to ponder
On that little prayer,
When he, in his closet—kneeling down to pray,
Told his griefs to Jesus, in his simple way.

G. C.





In the cavern.

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THE "GOD IS LOVE" SUNDAY SCHOOL.

 GENTLEMAN was walking along the street, when a lad accosted him and said,

"Good morning, sir."

"Good morning," replied the gentleman, "but I don't know you."

"Yes sir, you do," said the boy, "you know me at school."

"What school do you mean?" "Why, the 'God is Love' school," said the boy. Then the gentleman knew that he meant the Sunday school, because there had been this short text, "God is Love," hung at the

end of their schoolroom for many years past, and being the only text in the room it was the more prominent.

He was pleased to find that the boy remembered it, and hoped that he might know God's love.

Well, the superintendent of that same Sunday school was travelling abroad one summer, and with a number of friends he entered a large underground stone quarry.

Of course being beneath the ground it was quite dark, and therefore they had to take candles with them. While exploring the vast depths to which it penetrated, he noticed the names on the roof of the quarry of many persons who had visited the place before. Now what do you think he wrote there instead of his own name?

Holding up his candle to the stone roof of the quarry, he gently guided it while the smoke slowly formed the same words that are hung on the walls of his Sunday school, "God is Love."

This would be a message to any who may follow his footsteps and explore that underground quarry.

Many people know as a fact that God is love, for they have heard those words many times perhaps, learned them at Sunday school and read them in the Bible themselves; yet it is not enough merely to know them, we need to enjoy them, and to know that they are intended for us. And how striking would it be to find these words in such a dark place underground! I hope they may meet the eyes of many who have

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~~never~~
never heard them before. Boys, and girls too, require to be reminded of this loving message, for they may not yet have learned it in their hearts. May *we* believe that God has loved us, and given His Son for us, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is through the kindness of that same gentleman that I have the picture of him writing in the quarry.



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