

# BAPTIST FEATURES

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Children's Page  
June 23, 1955

ANNA AND THE SPARROW  
BY: Allie B. Grimes

"Anna!"

Anna went to the door. It was the big boy who lived next door, and he was holding something in his hands. Anna thought it was a big pile of dry grass and twigs.

"Do you want a baby bird, Anna?" asked the boy. "Here is one I found over by the factory. The fire prevention men probably tore down the nest. Guess they overlooked this one when they destroyed the other nests."

Anna looked in the pile of grass. She saw that it was a large nest. In the nest was a tiny bird. He had no feathers. His head and mouth seemed much too large for his body. Every time the nest moved, the little bird opened his mouth wide and said something like, "Peep! Peep! Peep!"

"It's a sparrow," the boy explained. "Their large nests are fire hazards. A spark may fall in the dry straw and cause a fire."

"Oh, I want him," said Anna. "I'll ask Mother if I may keep him."

Mother came to see the baby bird.

"He seems very hungry, Mother," said Anna.

"He certainly seems ready to eat," answered Mother. "Do you think you can find enough grasshoppers and crickets and worms to feed him?"

"Yes, I'm sure I can. I see lots of them when I play in the yard. I'll catch them for the baby bird."

Anna put the nest in a box on the back screened porch. Then she ran into the yard and caught a small grasshopper. She took a small stick and mashed the grasshopper's long back legs and took him to the nest. She said, "Are you hungry, little Sweet?"

When she touched the nest, the baby bird opened his mouth as wide as he could. Anna put the grasshopper, head first, down into the bird's mouth. Sweet swallowed the grasshopper quickly and opened his mouth again.

"Peep! Peep! Peep!" he said.

Anna laughed.

"He liked it, Mother. I'm sure I can raise him. He eats beautifully!"

Every day Anna caught grasshoppers or crickets or worms for Sweet. He grew very fast. Soon he had all his feathers. After a while he was strong enough to

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leave the nest and hop about the porch. When he could fly, he would sit on Anna's shoulder and pull her hair. He said "Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!" now. He was glad to see Anna when she came home from school in the afternoons. He seemed afraid of everyone but Anna.

Anna began to take him outdoors while she found his food, and soon he learned to catch his own food. Anna let him stay outdoors part of the time. About sun-down when he came to the back door, Anna would let him in. He would sleep in his gourd on the back porch.

One day when Sweet was outdoors, Anna went to call him. As she spoke, a large flock of sparrows rose from the yard next door and flew away. One sparrow left the flock, flew to Anna, and lit on her shoulder. Anna was happy. She went and told Mother what had happened.

"Isn't he a lovely pet?" she asked.

"Yes," said Mother, "but Sweet will leave us soon. He will go away with the other sparrows."

"Will he be happy with them?" asked Anna.

"He will be much happier with them," said Mother, "because he is like them. They are his friends and relatives."

One day Anna and Mother went out of town. Sweet was not at home when they left.

"Where will Sweet sleep tonight, Mother?" asked Anna. "I will not be here to let him in."

"He will sleep with the other sparrows tonight," said Mother.

The next day Sweet did not come home. Anna did not see the flock of sparrows for a long time. She did not see Sweet again.

"He is happy with his bird family," she told Mother, "but I know he will think of me sometimes and love me."

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## THE FLAMING JEWEL

There is a legend about a Prince who sent one of his Knights on a perilous journey. As the Knight departed, the Prince placed around his neck a golden chain on which was hung a flaming ruby.

"Wear this," the Prince said. "It will serve you well. Never part with it,

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for it is your most priceless treasure."

The Knight set forth and had many exciting and dangerous adventures, but always the Prince's jewel, pressed close against his bosom, sustained and strengthened him.

When he took the wrong road, the jewel burned until he returned to the forks and chose the right way. When he was tempted to do wrong, the jewel burned courage into his soul. When he was sad, it lay in warm comfort against his heart.

At length, with the ruby pressed close to his breast, the Knight, having conquered the last dragon, entered the shining gates of the castle which stood at the end of his journey.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee---Psalm 119:11.

The Bible is your ruby, your flaming jewel. When you memorize its verses, you are holding it close to you, pressing it into your mind and heart, and it will help you when you need it.

If you are tempted to take something that does not belong to you, the words come, "Thou shalt not steal." You know that it is the ruby, burning against your conscience, warning you of danger.

When trouble comes, like death, to some one you love, the Bible says, "Let not your heart be troubled," and "All things work together for good." The jewel lies in warm comfort against your breast, reminding you that "God doeth all things well," and that his plans are best.

I am the Bible.  
To the weary pilgrim, I am a strong staff.  
To one who sits in gloom, I am a glorious light.  
To those who stoop beneath heavy burdens, I  
    am sweet rest.  
To Him who has lost his way, I am a safe guide.  
To the discouraged, I whisper words of hope.  
To those who suffer in loneliness, I am a friend.  
Use me, I can help you.

NOTE TO EDITOR: Please carry this credit: "The Flaming Jewel," is from the book, Shining Armor, by Edna Ewing Kelley.