

Junior Department

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A Christmas Fairy

The children in heaven one happy day
Were blest with a new delight,
For a palace they never before had seen,
Was glowing with radiance bright;
From doors and windows the white light streamed,
And the angel guides said: "Come!"
And the walls were jeweled with precious stones
From pavement to glittering dome.

Rising up from a bank of flowers,
A towering tree was green
All laden with strange and marvelous toys,
And tapers and fruits between;
The very air was vibrant with joy,
And a sweet expectant thrill,
While rank by rank the children came
The beautiful court to fill.

Then out from the midst of the tree there stepped
The Christ whom they loved so well;
And over the waiting and eager throng,
A wondering silence fell;
And he raised his beautiful hands and smiled,
And said to them tenderly,
"Oh, blest are ye all, my little ones,
Yea, blest since ye came to me!"

Over their heads he lifted his hands,
And the children knelt and smiled,
And the angels sang in the holy hush
A song for the dear Christ child;
And over them all the clear light streamed,
And the glad little children smiled,
And the angels sang, and the harpers played
A song for the dear Christ-child.

And the fair young faces were all alight
With the raptures of the skies,
For the best and rarest of joys are kept
Where the heart of his kingdom lies.
But never a pen nor tongue can tell
Of those blisses beyond compare;
And so we can only dream, and dream,
Of the keeping of Christmas there!
—Emma A. Lente, in Epworth Herald.

Weekly Topics

December 11.—"People whom Jesus loved." John 11. 5. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

While on the earth Jesus had his companions. They were very dear to him. Three of these friends are mentioned in our topics this week. Their home was at Bethany. This was a village on the slope of the Mount of Olives, and not far from Jerusalem. At this home Jesus stayed more than once, and here he ever found a hearty welcome. There were two sisters and a brother. Their names were, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. There are some very beautiful stories told of the Saviour's visits in the life of our Lord. The place is mentioned eleven times in the New Testament, and it will be a good exercise for some one to find these references and tell of what they speak. Then in treating of the lessons of the topic, show that Jesus was thoroughly human and needed friends who

could give him loving sympathy, and who would be his true and faithful companions. This brings up the important lesson of human friendships. Our Juniors should be instructed about having a friend and being one. Jesus had friends, and he was a true friend. So should it be with us all. Make it clear that while Jesus loves all, he does not love all alike. When he was on earth he loved all, even sinners that hated him; but he did not love them all in the same way. Explain that true love is based on affinity between the persons loving. Jesus did not love the proud and hateful Scribes and Pharisees as he did Peter or James or John. They had no affinity for him. That is, they did not like what he liked, were not drawn to his way of life, there was nothing in common between them at all. Jesus loves all in the sense of pity that prompts sympathy and help; but he does not love all in the true sense of spiritual companionship. We must love him to be loved by him in this way. If we do not love his ways of living we cannot walk with him. If we do not love his character we cannot commune with him. (Show by the common illustration of a magnet drawing to itself a piece of steel, that only that which is like itself can be influenced by it. It will not draw wood. So Jesus must find something in us that answers to his nature before he can truly love us.) There is wonderful help in having this true love of Jesus. He is the friend that is always true. There is great joy in such friendship. He is ever

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ready to give us highest enjoyment. And again, there is great responsibility in being a friend. We must always be true to others and helpful at all times. Are we true to Jesus as friends? Do we try to do his work with joy? Let all learn these lines:

"If I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to
fear;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself most dear.
Shall I not take care of all I think,
Yea, ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else?"

Conclude by impressing the thoughts that to be truly loved by Jesus, we must (1) Be like him. (2) Follow him. (3) Do what he says. (4) Labor for him. This will not be hard, for his love will make his service easy and our love for him will make it our joy to serve him. (Sing hymn 344 in our Church Hymnal.)

Dec. 18.—"Reform that lasts." 2 Cor. 6. 7. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Most people want to be good. But too many want to be good on the outside only. Make it clear to the Juniors that real goodness is thorough. It is genuine. Its source and seat are in the heart. Unless that is pure the character is unholy, and character is everything in morals. So

it is not enough to be reformed in outward conduct unless we are purified in inward motive. Show how easy it is for a boy or girl to be just as good as they have to be. Many are not as good as they can be. They are satisfied to be as good as their fellows are. So they fail to be good always, and that is what Jesus wants us to be. Not good once in a while, not when someone is looking only, not because we are afraid of being punished if we are bad, but good through and through, and in everything. This can be only if "old things" (evil heart of the flesh) pass away and a new heart is given us. Then we are good from the inside out, not from the outside in. The difference is easily seen. If our heart is "new," we will want to be good for the sake of goodness, not for reward or fear of blame. Not because someone else is; but because we want to please Christ as much as if no one else was serving him. Explain that He weighs our motives, not all we do. An action that is in appearance good may be bad if done from a wrong motive. He wants us to be trustworthy. That is, he wants us to do when we are alone just as well as we would do if all the world were looking at us. Are we always diligent at school when the teacher's back is turned? Are we industrious at home when mother is not looking? Are we kind when it would be easier to be cross? In short, can Jesus depend on us? He wants dependable boys and girls. These "last" i.e., endure. How often many of us are good just when we feel like it. For a while we do right; but it doesn't "last." "Will started out well as a Christian, but he didn't last," was said of a boy we know. "What a pity Mary didn't last," we heard of a girl who wanted to serve God. What was the matter with them? They were not kept right inside. That was the whole trouble. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Solomon knew what was needed to "last," and so we need his wise advice. The next tells us how we are to "become new." "In Christ," are the two words that show the secret. What does this mean? Simply that we have confessed and forsaken our sins and devoted our lives to him, and that he has returned to us and forgiven us and accepted us to be his disciples forever. In John, 15th chapter, he speaks about abiding in him, and tells what blessings result to those that do so. So we must be careful that nothing ever separates us from him. Then we will "last," and he will give us "eternal life."

Dec. 25.—"Christmas Joys." Luke 2. 8-14. "... good things of great joy... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord... Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

You will perhaps find the following suggestive enough for a good Christmas service. Work out the plan little by little until you have the outline before you as follows:

CHRISTMAS—Christ—Came—Cradle.
Heaven—Holy—Happy.
Employment—Everybody.
Earth—Everywhere.
Ready—Redeemer—Reign.

So the story may be told and its lessons learned until you have the summary of the whole record. Christmas cheer! Why? Because Christ came from Heaven to make us Holy and Happy in his Salvation. This Salvation is not for a few; but for "all people." The whole Earth Everywhere is to hear of it. How? By our doing as the Shepherds did, telling the story. Here is Employment for Everybody. If we tell the story we will be making the Earth Ready for the Redeemer when He comes again to Reign.