

## Devotional Service

(The Missionary Text-Book for this year is "Methodism in Canada," by Rev. A. Sutherland, D.D. The missionary topics correspond with the chapters of this book, which can be secured from Dr. F. C. Stephenson, Wesley Buildings, Toronto. Price, postpaid, in cloth, 50 cents; in paper covers, 35 cents.)

### DEC. 16.—"WHAT TRUTH HAS CHIEFLY APPEALED TO YOU FROM OUR YEAR'S SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS?"

Matt. 13. 52; Isa. 52. 13-15—53. 1, 2.

#### DAILY READINGS.

Mon., Dec. 10.—Objects of the Scriptures.  
2 Tim. 3. 14-15.  
Tues., Dec. 11.—Christ proclaimed. John 20. 26-31.  
Wed., Dec. 12.—Sin rebuked. Heb. 4. 1-13.  
Thurs., Dec. 13.—Saints built up. 1 Cor. 14. 21-25.  
Fri., Dec. 14.—Lives cleansed. Isa. 6. 1-9.  
Sat., Dec. 15.—The unchangeable Word. Rev. 22. 18-21.

We have now had in the Sunday-school a year's continuous study of the Life of lives. It is impossible to imagine the blessed results that must have flowed from this study. We can note, however, a few of the general impressions that must have been made upon the minds of the thoughtful scholars.

We have been studying the first three Gospels, which are pre-eminently the Gospels of deeds, while the fourth Gospel deals rather with our Lord's words. What we found to be the leading characteristics of Christ's deeds are:

First, they are plainly marked by absolute singleness of purpose. Our Saviour did not turn aside, however great the temptation, to politics, or philosophy, or social reform, or even to the organization of a church. He came to earth just to save men's souls, and that was the one thing He did.

Second, Christ's deeds are marked quite as plainly by simplicity of means. He had one aim—to show God as the all-loving Father. And so His miracles were works of helpfulness and not of terror; calming storms rather than raising them. His parables were full of comfort, and His words were seldom of denunciation.

Third, Christ's deeds were marked by a lack of an apparent plan. He took His opportunities as they came, without a particle of forcing. Indeed, it would seem to be proved by Christ's life that any series of the most ordinary events gives full opportunity for the exhibition of all Christianity, of the entire God-head.

Fourth, we may see in all of Christ's life the flowering of a perfect knowledge of human nature. His ministry is almost entirely made up of the telling of stories and the giving of object lessons. He knew that "men are but children of a larger growth," and that what appeals to the child-heart appeals to all mankind.

Fifth, let us note the power of Christ's life. See the crowds that flocked around Him. How He won men's hearts, and held them! How gladly, through all ages, have men seen in all of Christ's life the flowering of a perfect knowledge of human nature. His ministry is almost entirely made up of the telling of stories and the giving of object lessons. He knew that "men are but children of a larger growth," and that what appeals to the child-heart appeals to all mankind.

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It will be the secret of our power also, if we take up our crosses and follow Him. Our lives, if they are to draw other lives

and hold them, must, like Christ's, be based upon self-sacrifice. That is our great lesson from this year's lessons in the Wonderful Life.—Amos R. Wells.

#### A YEAR WITH CHRIST'S LIFE.

From the shepherds of Bethlehem we learn how heaven may glorify our common work.

From the wise men of the East we learn that the height of wisdom is to bow at Jesus' feet.

From the boy Jesus in the temple we learn that the only business of our life ought to be our Father's business.

From Christ's temptation we learn that whoever has his Bible in his heart is armed against the devil.

From the calling of the disciples we learn that the first duty of a Christian—*as of a soldier*—is to obey.

From the Beatitudes we learn that if we seek what the world calls happiness we shall never find what Christ calls happiness.

From the parable of the two foundations we learn that the most important thing in life is to start right.

From the parable of the sower we learn that not even Christ can teach us unless we listen.

From the parable of the tares we learn that the only way to outwit the devil is to watch by night as well as by day.

From the healing of the Gadarene demons we learn never to despair of any one.

From the death of John the Baptist we learn how glorious a failure may be.

From the feeding of the five thousand we learn that our success does not depend on the size of our gifts to Christ, but on our giving what we have.

From the Syro-Phœnician woman we learn that Christ rejoices to be compelled by human faith.

From Peter's confession we learn not to wait to be perfect before testifying for Christ.

From the transfiguration we learn that heaven with all its glories is close around this earth.

From the parable of the good Samaritan we learn to "do the next thing."

From the rich young ruler we learn to pray to be delivered from the temptation of wealth.

From Zacheus we learn that a lofty soul is better than a tall body.

From Christ's trial we learn to fear the terrible power of fanaticism and selfishness, lest it seize upon our own hearts also.

From the crucifixion we learn how God loves us.

From the resurrection we learn to live "by the power of an endless life."

—C. E. Manual.

#### QUESTION SUPPLIES.

How much time have I spent on the study of the Scriptures this year?

Have the lessons been a spiritual inspiration to me?

What can we do to get more out of these Sunday-school lessons in future?

### DEC. 23.—"HOW CAN WE CARRY THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT THROUGH 1907?"

Like 2. 9-20.

#### DAILY READINGS.

Mon., Dec. 17.—Christ's birth seen from afar. Isa. 9. 1-6.  
Tues., Dec. 18.—Its cheer foretold. Pa. 98. 1-9.  
Wed., Dec. 19.—"Good tidings." Isa. 40. 9-11.  
Thurs., Dec. 20.—Out of Bethlehem. Mic. 5. 1-7.  
Fri., Dec. 21.—Son of David. Ps. 89. 20-37.  
Sat., Dec. 22.—Sweet story of old. Matt. 1. 18-25.

Phillips Brooks was a Christmas poet, and one of his lovely Advent hymns is called "Constant Christmas," and shows how perpetual is the spirit of this beautiful anniversary:

The sky can still remember  
The earliest Christmas morn,  
When in the cold December,  
The Saviour Christ was born.

And still in darkness clouded,  
And still in noon-day light,  
It feels its far depths crowded  
With angels fair and bright.

"Christmas comes but once a year" is a common saying, on which Mr. Riley has based one of his pathetic poems; but, like many other common sayings, it is only a half truth, for Christmas may come all the year. The Christmas spirit would not be good for December 25 unless it were good for all the 364 days that follow.

What is this Christmas spirit, that is to be thus perpetuated? It is not the spirit of mere merry-making. It is not the mere giving of gifts. Those could be associated with any other day as well as with the Advent day. But the Christmas spirit is the merry-making and the gift-giving, the joy and the love, based on Christ. We carry that spirit through the year as we carry it with our hearts through the year. Cunningham Gielick, in "The Abiding Christmas of the Soul," expresses the thought thus: "The true keeping of Christmas is the realization of the great love that brought us salvation and left us the example of a divine life; that we should repeat it, with God's help, in all our relations to God and to our fellow-men. Your life will be, through all its course, in proportion as you have in your mind that was in Him, like that street of the New Jerusalem in which the redeemed walk by the clear flowing water of life, bordered by the fair trees from which they gather immortality, with all manner of fruits; blossoming and yielding their celestial joys unendingly through the unending year of eternal love."

This Christmas spirit is made up of several lovely elements. One of them is the child spirit. It is the spirit of humility that led our Lord to come to the earth as a child. I remember a touching article in which F. B. Meyer said that his chief Christmas desire was to get down on the floor and have a romp with the children.

Another element is the element of helpfulness. Christ came to earth to save men, and the thought of saving men—if only from their gloom—must never be absent from our Christmases.

Another element, of course, is the Advent joy. On this day, when the very sky was full of song, surely our hearts should sing with all their might.

And perhaps the final element is that of worship. It was "glory to God" that the angels sang. Our Christmas, indeed, will be a perfect one, worth continuing through the year, in proportion as it glorifies God.—Amos R. Wells.

#### BIBLE LIGHT.

The shepherds "were sore afraid." Christ came to bring heaven's glories near, and take away our fear of them (v. 9).

The Christmas joy would not be a joy to any people if it were not "to all people" (v. 10).

First comes "glory to God"; not until we seek that with all our hearts may we expect "peace on earth" (v. 14).

The shepherds had the true Christmas idea. What they had seen, they made a Christmas gift, to all that would listen (v. 17).