

of Jesus, it remains to make a personal appeal to the class. By careful, earnest teaching, the truth can touch the heart, and the teacher will do well to prepare for this personal dealing. In whatever way may be considered best, seek to have the scholars give themselves to the Saviour and regard themselves as subject, of the King and sharers in His glorious work of redemption.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

A Christmas Lesson; and the imagination immediately takes flight to the far away land where the angels sang the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. Begin, therefore, with—

A lesson in geography. The least skilled teacher can sketch an outline of the Holy Land, with its sea-coast, its Jordan, and its three great divisions, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. This was the land when our Lord came. Now plant the old names of Isaiah's prophecy—Zebulun and Naphtali (names of tribes); these are Upper and Lower Galilee; "beyond Jordan," the country to the east; "Galilee of the nations," the northernmost corner of Upper Galilee, where other peoples were mingled with the Jews. Now—

A lesson in history. These lands were "afflicted" (v. 1): for instance, by the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser (2 Kgs. 15: 29); and a frightful scourge those fierce warriors from the far East were. Isaiah, from whose prophecies the Lesson comes, proclaims a great Deliverer. It might be well to have the very best reader in the class, or the class in unison, read aloud the whole passage:—mark the joy bells that ring all through its verses!

A lesson in figures of speech. Clear up v. 1 by means of the Revised Version—no more

gloom nor contempt, but the land made glorious: in one word, deliverance to the distressed nation. The prophet's tongue fairly struggles with the similes that burst forth in description of how marvellous the deliverance is to be. Marshal them: sunrise into the deepest, darkest valleys (v. 2); the joy of harvesters, and of a conquering host (v. 3); the "yoke" broken, which carried the heavy burden, and the "staff" by which the burden-bearer was beaten, and the "rod" by which he was forced forward in his task—the measure of the victory, that of Gideon's rout of the Midianites (Judg. 7: 1-25); also v. 5 as in Rev. Ver. (all the armor of the foe and the blood stained garments burnt with fire). What does it all mean? That God will deliver, oh, so gloriously, His own people. When shall it be? Whence shall it come? Who will be the Deliverer? These are questions that spring to the tongue. Here is the answer:—

A portrait, a promise and a pledge. "A child is born." Have the class read or recite Luke 2: 10, 11. A child, grown to manhood and kingship—"the government shall be upon his shoulders" (compare John 18: 37). His titles, every one of them truly belonging to Him—have the list (v. 6) recited, and have the class prove that each one of them belongs to the Lord Christ. (Be sure to have the proofs ready, should the class fail at any point. Rev. 1: 13-16; 19: 16 gives His portrait as drawn by the one who knew Him best on earth, and had the closest sight of Him in His glory in heaven. This glorious One was Israel's Deliverer; and is ours. As to the "promise" and the "pledge" of v. 7, it is good Christmas employment to count how far these have been made good.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

For the believer, grief is sure to give place to glory. v. 1.

The church must grow because she is nourished by divine grace. v. 2.

The darker the doom, the greater the delight of deliverance. v. 2.

Christ can make radiant the life that is fullest of gloom. v. 2.

Like flowers in the springtime, joy springs up under the influence of the gospel. v. 3.

True freedom grows only in Christian soil. v. 4.

The mercies of the past are the pledge of provision for the present. v. 5.

A world-wide peace is the product of a world-wide evangelization. v. 5.