

except when they come into conflict with our duty to the kingdom. (3) Our duty to the kingdom often demands care of a parent, etc. Indicate that until we have learned the joy of self-sacrifice for the king, we are strangers to the joy of his fellowship. The lesson of Christmas is "Give thyself."

### For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Refer to the teacher of a big Bible Class who asked his scholars what they considered the happiest day in the year. Some said that they always tried to make the present day the happiest, but many held that Christmas was the happiest day. Even Old Scrooge in Dickens' Christmas Carol, could not forever keep the beautiful spirit of this happy season out of his heart. What must the world have been like when there was no Christmas? Remind the class that Christ has been in the sacred literature of the world from the beginning, and that now the world is full of literature which bears his name and breathes his spirit. We have in the combined lessons for to-day :

1. *The Christ of Prophecy*, Isa. 9 : 2-7. Question the class about the vision of the coming Christ which gladdened the heart of the prophet when his day of life was dark. Bring out that Christ is revealed as the light of the nation (v. 2), as the joy of life (v. 3), as the power which breaks the rod of the oppressor, and makes the yoke easy and the burden light, v. 4. Note that this divine deliverer was revealed to the prophet, not only as coming in human form but as coming as a babe, v. 6. This is the clearest intimation of the incarnation which we have in the Old Testament. Question the class about the five names (v. 6), the descriptive terms, which reveal the manifold nature of Christ, each revealing some distinct aspect of his person and mission ; and show that when there is universal righteousness there will be universal peace, and man to man the world o'er shall brothers be.

2. *The Christ of History*, Luke 9 : 49-62. Note that we have in this passage the Christ of prophecy working out his mission in human form in the history of the world. Bring out that the special features of Christ's work revealed here are the training of his disciples

into larger and better views of life (vs. 49-56), and the instruction of earnest inquirers, vs. 57-62. Call attention to the broad, beautiful spirit of the master, who recognizes in every person doing good a friend of his. Discuss Christ's dealings with the three would-be disciples. (See For Teachers of Bible Classes.) Show how much of Christ's life was spent in dealing with individuals. This is the most difficult kind of Christian work, but it is often the most satisfactory. Lead the class to see that this is a kind of work which we should all do. If we keep very near to Christ he will teach us what to say and what to do.

### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

Question out the meaning of Christmas. Ask who foretold Christ's coming, and speak of to-day's lesson as giving, first, a promise of Christ's coming and, second, how he rules in the hearts of his followers. What time had passed between the writing of the two lesson passages ? (See Lesson Setting.)

I. DARKNESS MADE LIGHT, vs. 2-7. The prophet sees in his vision the conditions which Christ brings. Call for the Golden Text in v. 6 as the cause of the great changes described in the previous verses. Then have the scholars go back to vs. 3-7 and tell what these changes are. Discuss the meaning of darkness as a symbol of the sad, gloomy, evil things in life, and of light as symbolizing all that is bright, cheerful, good. One of the scholars will look up Christ's words in John 8 : 12.

Vs. 4, 5 tell how God, by sending Christ, opens a way for men to escape oppression and bondage. Have the class name some of our taskmasters from which Christ will free us if we love and follow him. Ask some one to quote Christ's words in Matt. 11 : 28-30 about his "yoke."

II. FOLLOWING THE LIGHT, Luke 9 : 49-62. Study these verses as Jesus teaching us how to live in the joy of his light,—the true joy of Christmastide.

1. *Working with him*, vs. 49, 50. Question the class on this incident and show that every one who earnestly seeks to banish evil belongs to Christ, though he may not belong to this or that particular sect.

2. *Receiving others in Christlike spirit*, vs