

LESSON XIII.-DEC. 24 ,1911.

Jesus Born in Bethlehem-Christ mas Lesson .- Matt. 2: 1-12.

Commentary .- I. The coming of the wise men (vs. 1, 2). 1. When Jesus was born-The month and the day of Christ's birth are not definitely known, but the date now accepted, December 25, B. C. 4, corresponds to the facts which we have bearing upon the event. It appears inconsistent to say Christ was born four years before Christ, but it must be borne in mind that during several cen-tries after the coming of Christ there was no uniformity among nations in reckoning time. Finally, in the sixth century, a learned monk, Dionysius Exiguns, was appointed to ascertain the time of Christ's birth, and it was ordered that history should be dated from that time; but Dionysius, who first published his calculations in A. D. 526, put birth of Jesus about four years too late. In Bethlehem—Bethlehem means "House of bread." Bethlehem was situated six miles south of Jerusalem. Of Judea—There was another Bethlehem, which was situated in Galilee (Josh, xix. which was situated in Galilee (Josh. xix.
15). The name Judea was given to the region comprising the southern part of Palestine. The greater part of Judea was formerly the territory occupied by the tribe of Judah. Herod—Herod the Great. He was an Edomite, and although a proselyte to the Jewish religion, was training for his wightedness and cruelly. notorious for his wickedness and cruelty. He reigned thirty-seven years in Judea, and died a few months after the birth of Christ. At this time "the sceptre was departing from Judea, a sign that the Messiah was now at hand." Wise men-Or magl. "Originally a class of priests among the Medes and Persians, priests among the Medes and Persians, who formed the king's privy council." They were men of learning and wealth. Augustine and Chrysostom say there were twelve magi, but the common because of the Persians. lief is there were but three. "The Persian magi believed in a Messiah or inture Saviour, who should in the latter day appear and renew the world in righteotisness."—Whedon. From the east—Perhaps from Modia, or Persia, r possibly from Arabia. To Jerusalem it was natural for them to expect to

generally known.

2. Where is he-This inquiry in Jerusalem brought Jesus into popular notice and called attention to the fact that the Messiah was to be born in Bethle-hem. Born King of the Jews—This was of Israel and applied to no one except the Messiah. It reappears in the inscrip tion over the cross.—Carr. Notice that Jesus was "born" a king. His star— Many interpreters, especially those who seek to eliminate the supernatural, ex-plain the "star" or "sidereal appearance" by a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which occurred in May, B. C. 7, and again in December, with Mars added. It is, however, much more in harmony with all the facts to believe that the star which attracted the attention of the mag: was provided for the occasion. To worship him-To do him homage. They were bold to confess the object of their

find Jesus, the new-born King, in the Jewish capital. They had reason to sup-pose that the birth of a king would be

Herod's distress and plot (vs. 3-8) 3. Heard these things—The inquiry o 3. Reard these things—the inquiry of the wise men for the infant King was reported to Herod at once, and created a profound sensation. Was troubled— The remembrance of his past deeds of cruelty and oppression, and his knowledge of the Roman policy in making frequent changes in the rulers of her prohis tenure of office was exceedingly uncertain. He feared that the King whom the wise men had come to worship was bout to displace him. All Jerusalem with him—Fearing that he would make this an occasion for renewing his acts of bloodshed. 4. Had gathered—He assembled the Sauhedrin.—Lightfoot. Chief priests—This expression probably comprehends the acting high priest and his deputy, those who had been high priests at this time the office was often transferred by the Roman authorities—and the heads of the twenty-four sac and the leads of the David had distri-lated into so many courses." Scribes— The learned interpreters of the Mosaic law and the collectors of the traditions of the elders. Many of them were Phar-isees. Demanded of them. Where the trist (R. V.)—Orthe Messiah, the offi-ial title of the promised deliverer. "The wise men had said nothing about the thrist, or the Messiah, but only about the King of the Jews. Herod saw that the King of the Jews. Herod saw that this King must be the expected Mes-

sigh. 5. By the prophet—The prophecy is found in Mic. 5: 2. 6. Art in no wise bast (R. V.)—Micah says, "Though thou he fittle among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth un tone that is to be ruler in Israel." Thi made Bethlehem "in no wise least." Al-though Bethlehem was little, yet it was exalted above all the other cities of Is-raci." This made Bethlehem "in no wise east." Although Bethlehem was little ties of Israel. The princes-"The thouendivided into thousands, and over each sub-division there was a chieftain or pittice.—Morison. A Governor—To con-tiol and rule. Who shall be shepherd (R. You To feed and care for his flock as a shepherd. Christ is both Shepherd and King. My people 1-rael-1-sraet was cool's people in a peculiar sense. 7. Privily called-Herod desired to keep the Come on, if you want, right into the kitchen. I'm all done, now. Yes, the kitchen. I'm all done, now. Yes, the kitchen of Christ's birth as secret as possible lest the fews who hated jim, should take occasion'fo rebel. Enquired of them dilgently. "Learned of them exactly."

IR. V. He inquired of them the exact may be the kitchen at received positive information as to the time the star appeared. Assuming that the star appeared when the edid was born, he would thus have some idea of the age of the child. S. He sent them—Ite assumed control; but they to loved the directions of the Lord. Search diligently—Herod was honest in making this charge to them; he greatly desired to receive definite word concerning the new King And worstlp him also—Herod for each edinite word concerning the new King And worstlp him also—Herod fad no desire to worstlp Jesus. His only object in desiring to know about him to death, but

he was to be defeated in his cruel pur

III.—The Finding of Jesus (vs. 9-12). 9. the star ... went before them—The same star which they had seen in their own country now again appears. star had disappeared for a time, and this led them to inquire in Jerusalem for the young King whom they sought. Supernatural helps should not be expected where ordinary means are to be had, stood over—The star pointed out the very house,—Benson 10, they rejoiced—The Greek is very emphatic. They rejoiced exceedingly because they saw they were about to find the child, and because they had such unmistakand because they had such unmistak-able proof of being in divine order. That alone is enough to cause rejoicing. 11. fell down—They prostrated themselves before him according to the eastern cusom. "In this act the person kneels and outs his head between his knees, his forehead at the same time touching the ground. It was used to express both out bringing them presents. The cus-tom still prevails in many places. gold, etc.—Gold would always be useful, while frankincense and myrrh were prized for their delicious fragrance. These were the very presents Isaiah mentioned: "All the very presents Isaiah mentioned: "All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense" (Isa, 60:6), "Incense, or frankincense, is a resinous gum, flowing from a tree, gashed for the purpose, growing in Arabia and Lebanon. Myrrh is also a gum obtained from a tree in Arabia."—Whedon,

12. warned of God in a dream-God ommunicated his purpose to them in a manner that they understood, and the impression or conviction was so clear that they at once obeyed, should not return to Herod—The command had been given them by Herod to return to him with a report regarding the child Jesus, but now there came a command from a higher source not to return to Herod. God could have preserved the life of the infant Saviour, even if Herod had known all the facts about him, vet he saw fit to blend human agency with divine in his protection. another They could easily have gone east wayfrom Bethlehem, and thus returned to their homes without going back to Jeru

Questions-Where was Jesus born Who was king of Judea? What was the character of the king? came to Jerusalem seeking for Jesus? From whence did they come? Why was Jesus called King of the Jews? How the wise men been led in their it: Why was Herod troubled? Whom Herod gather together? For what did Herod gather together? purpose? What charge did Herod give the wise men? Why? How did they approach Christ? What warning was given to the wise men? After leaving lesus, what did the wise men do? How are we rewarded for seeking Jesus?

PRACTICAL SURVEY. Topic .- The vital question. 1. Propounded by wise men. II. Investigated by rulers. III. Solved according to scripture.

I. Propounded by wise men. "Where is he?" No greater subject ever engrossed the attention of mortals than pressed upon the wise men who journeyed to Jerusalem in search of him who was "born King of the Jews." The in-quiry of the wise men was pointed and direct. It admitted no doubt as to the actual birth of a new king. Their question was important. It meant that a change was at hand. It touched the interests of all he world and inspired glorious mope to believing hearts. The faith of the wise men stood in strong contrast between the Gentiles and the unbelief of the Jews had been fully verified in the course of history. The first chapter of this gospel points out the part of the Jewish people had in connection with the Messiah. His genealogy and birth show that salvation was of the Jews. This second chapter presents the interests of the Gentile world in Christ. The star was the first ray of light to the Gentile world. The wise men were not in fear of any loss by the advent of a new king, though by the advent of a new king, though he was born of another nation. They were not guilty of any crimes against his people and so they were benefited by each new revelation respecting him. They were not only wise for their much learning but because they sought full enlightenment regarding God's revelation to the world of which they had gained only a faint glimmer. Their course had been straightforward since the first light fell upon them. From the first light fell upon them. From the first to the last they were divinely guided. They were encouraged in their hopes by an inward inspiration, nopes by an inward inspiration. The star had given testimony. Their hearts credited that token and they went to Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish wor-ship, to gain a more perfect know-

BANK OF MONTREAL

Ninety-Fourth Annual Meeting of Shareholders.

The Bank of Montreal has just completed 94 years of business in Canada, which in the history of a young country is no inconsiderable period. The 94th annual meeting was held on December 4th, with President R. B. Angus in the chair. In many ways the meeting was one of the most memorable in the history of the bank, owing to the local 4th the rear type for the year history of the bank, owing to the that the net profits for the year were the largest on record and that the retirement of Sir Edward Clouston as general manager was announced. Another feature of more than ordinary interest was the re-adjustment of th values of the bank premises. For years these were valued at \$600,000, but a recent appraisal increased this to \$4,000,000. The \$3,400,000 thus secured ground. It was used to earned every more reverence."—Clarke. but a recent appraisal increased this gifts—The people of the East did not stands with approach in the presence of kings with was partly used in increasing the rest out bringing them presents. The customer account, which now stands at a sum and the present of the customer and equal to the paid-up capital, while the balance was carried to the profit and oss account. The total assets of the bank now

stand at \$230,000,000, making it one of the strongest financial institutions on the continent. A more detailed examin ation of the report shows that the net profits for the year amounted to \$2, 276,518, as compared with \$1,797,992 for the previous year. The balance of pro-fit and loss carried forward for the present year was \$1,855,185, or practical ly double the figures for 1910, which amounted to \$901,789. Premiums on new bank stock issued by the bank during the year amounted to \$365,077, while the re-adjustment of the bank premises account brought in an additional \$3,-400,000. Thus a total of slightly over \$7,000,000 was made available for disribution this year, of which \$1,440,000 was expended in dividends, \$3,000,000 was expended to the rest account and \$708. credited to the rest account and \$708, 000 to new premises account, leaving a balance of \$1,855,000 to be carried for ward as balance of profit and loss. A further examination of the report shows that the bank has deposits bearing interest of nearly \$136,000,000, while its deposits now bearing interest amount to over \$46,000,000. The amount of call and about loans in Great Britain and and short loans in Great Britain and the United States consists of over \$42, 600,000, while the current loans and discounts in Canada and elsewhere amount to over \$121,000,000. The latter shows an increase of over \$9,000,000, which indicates that the bank continues to do its full share in furthering the develop-ment of the country and that it continues to grow with the country. To call tinues to grow with the country. To call and short loans which the bank keeps in New York and London, while returning only a small rate of interest, is found to be a wise provision. The call of these loans placed in London and New York is far less disturbing to Canion business than if they were on call adian business than if they were on call in Canada. Altogether the showing made by the

Bank of Montreal is a very satisfactory one and reflects the highest credit upon the directors and upon the general man-ager, who is now relinquishing the posi-tion which he has held for so many His successor will be Mr. H. V years. His successor will be Mr. H. V. Meredith, who has been associated all his life with the bank, whose affairs he

will in future direct.
The address of President R. B. Angus was, as usual, a careful resume of the financial, commercial and industrial ex pansion of the Dominion. The Bank of pansion of the Dominion. The Dank of Montreal, with its many branches scattered throughout the country and its intimate relationship with every phase of our national life, is able to present authoritative paragraphy than the present the present than the present that the present that the present the present that the present the present that the present the present the present that the present the present that the present the present that the present the present the present that the present of our national life, is able to present authoritative reports regarding the country's growth' and development. Without exception this year's report by the president was full of optimism. That this was not unfounded is shown by the bank's record for 1911, which was the most successful in the 94 years of its history.

CHRISTMAS SNOWDRIFT.

The term Christmas used in England in 1611. The goose, as a Christmas dish, comes

from Scotland. There is no historical mention of

Christmas tree before, 1605.

Christmas tree before, 1605.

Peacocks at one time took the place of turkeys on the Christmas table.

Last year 3.700 tons of Christmas evergreens entered London, their aggregate cost being about .233,000.

gate cost being about £33,000.

Christmas cards are a comparatively modern instituion. The idea came from the French New Year cards.

Paris uses fifty thousand Christmas trees each year, of which about twelve thousand are bought by foreigners residing in Paris.

siding in Paris. In the old days plum pottage—the or stary. Yea, tiginal form of plum pudding—was al Christmas carol.

ways served with the first course of a Christmas dinner. The largest Christmas candles made

The largest Christmas candles made are nearly six feet high, weigh about forty pounds, are of pure white beeswax and cost five pounds apiece.

"Free gangway" is usually a special Christmas privilege aboard ship in the navy. It means that any or all can go ashore, as they please.

Mistletoe is common in several parts of the world. It is extremely plentiful

of the world. It is extremely plentiful on several apple trees in Normandy and Brittany.

Brittany.

In Devonshire the Yule log is known as the Ashton faggot. The faggot is composed of a bundle of ash sticks bound with nine bands of the same vood. The great event of the old Christmas

dinner four or five hundred years ago was the entry of the chief cook bearing boar's head, garnished with rose The first Christmas tree in a British

Royal palace was in the reign of George IV. Lord John Russell was present, and speaks of the tree being covered with colored candles. with colored candles.

Turkeys, mince pies and plum puddings are now regarded as the chief items in the Christmas dinner; but at one time they were mere side dishes in an enormous number of courses.

IF I WERE SANTA CLAUS.

If only I were Santa Claus I'd travel east and west every hovel where there lies

little child at rest;
I'd drive my reindeer over they'd never trod before, over roofs

they'd never trod before.
I'd seek the tenements where sleep
the babies on the floor;
Where rags are stuffed in broken
panes to keep the wind away,
And where a warm and cozy room
is never known to-day.
For even there I know I'd find hung

up and stockings small gns that they expected me on Christmas Eve to call:

If only I were Santa Claus, I'd pass the mansions by And seek the cold and cheerless homes where pale-faced youngsters lie; And as they slept I'd pause a while and, bending low, I'd kiss The lips of every little tot—not one

of them I'd miss: And then I'd fill their stockings full of toys and sugar plums,
And leave them sleighs and skates and doll and Teddy bears and

would not pass a cottage by, but I would try to be nta Claus to every tot who still has faith in me.

If only I were Santa Claus-+1'd make the mothers glad, The dear hard-working mothers who

at Unristmas time are sad;
The kind and patient mothers, who
rock their babies to sleep.
And through the lonely hours of
night sob bitterly and weep. at Christmas time are sad;

see their precious little ones half clad and hungry, too, Knowing the sorrow that must com to them when night is through To every mother's face I'd bring the smiles once more, and we Would spend a while together at her babies' Christmas tree.

A CHRISTMAS COMMANDMENT.

(By Albert Frederick Wilson.)

This then shall make the Christman heart: Love strewn like red, red rose across the Christmas dawn; not barter love, like merchandise exchanged upor the market places; but love thrown free and large from out the heart's red garden. Great handfuls scattered generous ly, yet tenderly, that Youth may not trample nor Old Age look with cynic eye. Love strewn like red roses; that eye. Love strewn like red roses; that the clutching hand may drop its sweated gold to place the red, warm bloom within a rusted besom; that the barren hand in every hut and hovel may reach out and grasp its first real treasure.

eart.
And these shall make the Christmas prayer: Lips all sweet with gratitude hands all strong from the workshop's close comradery; feet that are weary from field and street; backs that bene beneath the Samaritan load. Yea, these shall make the Christmas prayer.

And these shall make the Christmas

carol: The prodigal's song upon the old home road; the scraping of ten thousand chairs in city barracks, where Sa sand chairs in city barracks, where Saivation Army beards complain beneath the feast; the tread of giftfolk upon the tenements' dark stairways: the laughter of little children in toyland's mystic realms; silver bells across the hills of snow; the whole glad world's pure Yea, these shall make the



The Bride's First Christmas.

Mrs. John Vincent Harris entered the big department store and scated herself at the nearest counter. "No, nothing, thank you," she said to the solicitous clerk. "I just want to make sure I have my list with me. It is so difficult to shop my list with me. It is so difficult to shop at this time of the year, and it is always difficult to find anything for one's —husband. Yes, I suppose many people did their shopping earlier, but I didn't have him then. I mean—

"Why, you sell neckties, don't you? How fortunate! They are on my list. No, I don't think of any particular kind but something for a tall man. He is a whole head taller than—You say a four-in-hand? Oh. I am afraid he couldn't tie.

whole head talier than—You say a four-in-hand? Oh, I am afraid he couldn't tie that, but you might give me a two-in-hand. Thank you; that is very pretty, but it is blue. He doesn't like blue. Of course you couldn't know that. Not that one. Why, my papa wears them, and he is lots older. Yes, that one will

"Mr Floorwalker, where are the col Mr. Floorwalker, where are the col-lars? Thank you. (She approaches the counter.) You, please—are you busy? I want some collars for my husband. Oh, are these ladies' collars? How stupid! I told that man distinctly

I wanted collars.

(At the right place.) "Are husbands' collars here? Well, I am glad I have found the right place at last. Size? You clerks always ask so many questions. tions, I never bought any before, be-cause we've been married only— No, his neck isn't very large. Why, I can reach-But he has real broad shouldders. How nice you are to think of that! Yes, a box of assorted sizes would be just the them would be sure to be right, and I could cut the others off—that is, if they were not too small. You'd better put were not too small. You'd better put in nearly all large sizes. You see, I am starting out as economical as I can be. I think it must be so discouraging for a a man to have a woman spend his money on frivolous things. Now, as I was com-ing down the street I saw a big sale of hats—mov's hats. They had been in the hats—men's hats. They had been in the window and were a little soiled, but I I got some of that "1910" soap it would make them look like new. Mr. Harris is very particular about his clothes. won't wear trousers unless they are pressed. So I bought three of these hats

pressed. So I bought three of these hat a Don't you think they will last him a long time and save money?

"Mr. Floorwalker. where are the gloves? Gentlemen's? Well, I hope he is. Why, he is my husband. Oh, I see what you mean! Yes, I want them for Mr. John Vincent Harris. (To glove salesman.) Now, don't ask me what size I want. Not too large and not too small, I should think you would learn some of the different sizes so you could tell people. (Holding out her hand.) It's lots larger than that. You think I wear a 6? Well, then, you'd better give me a 12 for him, for he can hold both my hands in one of his. Are these a special sale? Isn't 49 cents cheap for all that kid? Mine cost \$2. No, I don't think he will sent than the cost \$2. some of the dr think he will want more than two or three pairs. Now for the hose.

(In the women's hosiery department.) On Christmas eve the bells w

Are you busy? I have so many

things to get, please hurry. I just want to know where the other kind of hose are. It's for my husband. Thank you. (At the men's hosiery counter.) I want to get a hose—not like these, but —The size? Oh, about fifty feet Why, of course, I want it longer than a man. I—I you don't understand. It isn't this kind I want. No, nor ladies' either. I just want a hose we can both use.

Mr. Floorwalker, may I speak to you?

"That clerk isn't a bit nice, and I

think you ought to punish him. No he wasn't exactly impudent, but he was too busy to answer my questions. Thank you. I have had so much trouble to find the right kind of hose. I want long—no, I've been to that counter. I want one fifty feet long. You see, we are thinking of moving to the country in the spring, and we shall want to water the yard. Oh, ought I to have asked for the common garden variety?

"Now I think I have everything on the state of the common garden variety?"

my list except cigars, and I may well go to a cheaper place for them be John Vincent Harris always gives away all that I buy for him, he is so enerous."--Chicago News.

A REAL CHRISTMAS.

If yet there lurks in a dark corner of any man's heart the spirit of old Scrooge, why not re-read Dickens' classic "Christmas Carol?" And if the heart then refuse to warm to the season's cheer, Van Dyke's exquisite "The Other Wise Man" may save the day. Though there are some features of our present Christmas observances not altogether admirable, it is yet a splendid thing to put a child into the midst of this busy world, to light the candles on the tree and to distribute the gifts.

And to live at least one day in the And to live at least one day in the spirit of good-will—is it not an anticipation of the time when all men shall live in good-will all the days? It is December the twenty-fifth that keeps the world from growing old; every year on that day it renews its youth. No custom is more beautiful than that of exchanging gifts. And is it not possible to preserve the giving spirit of Christmas, freed from all taint of commercialism? "It is more blessed to give

Christmas, freed from all taint of com-merclalism? "It is more blessed to give than to receive" was declared many cen-turies ago. But when it comes to pass that he who receives a gift feels that he must give another in return, and of necessity of equal value—when Christ-mas giving comes to mean that I select something for my friends and my friends select something of the same value for me—it has fallen into a game of quid pro quo and has lost the genuine ring of Christian fellowship. He that gives thinking only of a return has yet to experience giving of the right sort. Let our giving be to remember friends, to our giving be to remember friends, to cheer the lonely, to relieve the needy, and all to be in the spirit of Tiny Tim's "God bless us, every one!"

We wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas.

CHRISTMAS.

And well our Christmas sires of old Lov'd when the year its course had roll'd, And brought blythe Christmas back

Sir Walter Scott.

again, With all its hospitable train,



Clean, Dry Heat

Clean, dry heat, with no smoke or odor and with no flying ashes or soot that is what you get with a Perfection Smokeless Oil Heater.

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The Perfection is the most reliable and convenient heating device you can find. It is always ready for use. There are no pipes or flues or wires to bother you. You can pick it up and take it wherever extra warmth is wanted.

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"Yes! Sniff all you like! Does smell good, I guess. I've been to busy these past days I haven't even had time to sniff.
"I declare I'm an excited as a child, Well, I never. Not in all my life did I see such fruit. Henry'll have to heller me out a punkin. I'll put it on the table, filled to spillin' over with oranges, apples, grapes and bananas.

bananas.

ages. And lively—don't say a word. The doin's those young ones think up—. But we just like it. They come to breakfast. Yes, sir. To eat chicken and dumplings, and skay 'til late evenin'. Oh, it's a day. How they do visit, big and little.

"There's one Great Grandmother. She's wonderful. And two grandmothers, besides the mothers and fathers and all the children. And eat—Well!