



### A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

A Merry Christmas to every boy and girl, youth and maiden, man and woman, who reads this paper. Better still, let us say at once—to everyone who still remains in his nature the pure, trustful spirit of childhood, so that he can join in the sweet merriment of Christmastide with a glad heart.

"Rejoice!" is the password to-day. Let the old cares fall off for a while at least; let a new hope and joy take their place; let every noble ambition, every good resolution, every faintest desire to live as God's own child be fostered and strengthened at this time of peace and goodwill. For on Christmas Day God's children are very like what Christ wants them to be all the year round, in their joyous self-forgiveness, their eager pursuit of one another's happiness, their childlike delight in the observances of the day, their reverence for what is purest and holiest in its associations, their nearness to the Babe of Bethlehem.

A merry, merry Christmas to you, one and all!—Wellspring.

### JESUS ON THE CROSS.

The heart-broken words, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" adopted by Jesus from the twenty-second Psalm, I have often thought especially reveals to us something of the penalty of sin, which he bore for us—in our stead. Most Scotch boys learn from the Shorter Catechism this: "All men, by their fall, lost communion with God." By sin we have "lost communion with God." We are now, in our fallen and natural state, like the branches of the apple-trees I see cast over the road-fence by a farmer out of his orchard, when he pruned it in the spring. I have seen them with buds and small leaves, sometimes with opening blossoms; but they are cut off from the tree and must die.

Now, was not this exactly the penalty pronounced upon Adam? He did not die in the literal sense on the day he ate the fruit; he lived for nine hundred years. Nor are we to think he died the eternal death: for we believe he died in faith. But the penalty came on the day he sinned, for God would keep his word. Then how? Why, in this cutting off from God. And he could only live again by being newly grafted in. Our Lord's parable about the vine and the branches, or Paul's about the olive-tree, will explain it.

It was this very penalty—this cutting-off from God, as a branch from a tree—that was pronounced in Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" For the penalty of sin, the wages of sin, is in all ages the same. And I apprehend that it was this very penalty that our Lord bore upon the tree. He, in taking our place, paid our penalty, whatever that might be. And here we find him, in this horror of darkness, cut off from God.

"Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry  
The universe hath shaken;  
It went up single, echoless;  
'My God! I am forsaken!'"

And the following circumstances brought very vividly to my mind the peculiar form and language of our Lord's cry on the cross. A ministerial brother once told me of his eldest son, who had died somewhere in the United States. His employer had written the father a letter, detailing the circumstances of his son's sickness and death, and among other things said: "During the last twenty-four hours of his life he wandered

much in his mind, and spoke to himself all the time in some language we could not understand." "Oh," I said to my old friend, knowing that he was from the Highlands, "that would be Gaelic." "Yes, I suppose so," replied he, "but he never heard Gaelic in his father's house. My wife and I, when we were married—we could speak both languages—agreed that we would keep house in English and use that language in our home; and our children never heard us speak anything but English. No doubt he heard the Gaelic on the school play-ground and among his little playmates from his earlier infancy; but it could hardly be called his native language." Yet here it was; the poor fellow, dying among strangers, wandered back in the mists of death to the heather and the Highland hills; and he was once more in imagination a little barefooted Highland boy, with tartan trows, and the honest Gaelic tongue. And is it too far-fetched to believe the same of Christ? that he too wandered back to the vernacular he had learned and lisped in his Highland home—for Nazareth was up among the hills, twelve hundred feet high—and now the language of his childhood was the language of his dying thoughts. No doubt he had taught much in Greek,—for Greek was the language of public life, just as the English is now among the Gaelic Highlands,—but the sanctities of life and death, and mother and infancy and home, all expressed themselves to his mind in the home-like Aramaic.

Let us comfort ourselves with the thought that whatever our penalty for sin was, Jesus bore it for us; and with the further thought that his enemies can no more reach him now. For he, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God."

## LESSON NOTES.

### LESSON I.—JANUARY 2.

#### JESUS AND JOHN.

Matt. 3. 7-17. Memory verses, 13-17.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3. 17.

#### OUTLINE.

1. John, v. 7-12.
2. Jesus, v. 13-17.

Time.—About January, A.D. 27.

Place.—Either Bethabara on the Jordan, or springs near to Salim, in the very heart of Samaria.

Rulers.—Pontius Pilate, procurator (governor) of Judea, just appointed; Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea; Herod Philip (not, however, the Herod Philip whose wife Herod Antipas had taken), tetrarch of Bashan.

#### HOME READINGS.

M. Jesus and John.—Matt. 3. 1-9.  
Tu. Jesus and John.—Matt. 3. 10-17.  
W. Prepare the way.—Isa. 40. 1-8.  
Th. A voice from heaven.—Luke 9. 28-36.  
F. John's witness.—John 1. 15-28.  
S. Behold the Lamb!—John 1. 29-37.  
Su. Sent before.—John 3. 23-36.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. John, v. 7-12.  
What unexpected visitors did John see?  
What pungent question did he ask them?  
What demand did he make on them?  
How did he rebuke their pride of ancestry?  
What prophecy of judgment did he utter?  
What two baptisms did he contrast?  
What separation would his successor surely make?  
What prophet predicted the ministry of John? Mal. 4. 5, 6.  
What did Jesus say about John? Luke 7. 28.
2. Jesus, v. 13-17.  
What unexpected applicant for baptism came to John?  
What journey had Jesus taken?  
What shows John's surprise?  
How did Jesus remove John's scruples?  
As Jesus came up from his baptism what opened to him?  
What wonderful vision had John?  
What did he subsequently say of this vision? John 1. 33, 34.  
Whence did John hear a voice?  
What did it say to him?  
From whom did the voice proceed?  
On what other occasion was similar testimony heard? Luke 9. 35.

#### TRUTHS TO LEARN.

- Where in this lesson are we shown—
1. An example of humility?
  2. An example of obedience to law?
  3. That Jesus is the Son of God?

### WINDOWS UNDER WATER.

The principle of the water telescope, so long used by fishermen to detect the presence of fish far below the surface of the water, has been successfully applied to the construction of a pleasure boat.

An eighteen-foot naphtha launch with a glass bottom has been constructed by a Newfoundland genius, and the experiment has proved a success to the extent that occupants of the boat can, while cruising about, see distinctly objects many feet below the surface of the sea. The greater part of the eighteen feet of the boat on the bottom is taken up with the glass. It is arranged in three divisions, fitted close with strips of heavy leather at the edges to prevent leaking. The glass is an inch thick. Ranged along the length of the boat, so as to inclose the glass on every side, there are fixed chairs arranged in position so that a sitter may look downward without the slightest effort.

### THE TRAP IN THE CELLAR.

BY CLARISSA POTTER.

In the west wall of our cellar is a long, narrow window, its lower sill on a level with the greensward of the yard into which it opens.

Opposite the window, in the cellar, are two swing shelves hanging one above the other and nearly two feet apart.

One day, when I was laying the supper table, I had need to go into the cellar.

The sun was low in the west and faced the cellar window. Bright sunset rays were streaming through the window, flooding that end of the cellar with golden light.

Beyond, in the corners, the stone walled room was nearly dark.

In the full flood of light—and only there—strung from shelf to shelf, were hundreds of gossamer threads running straight up and down.

It was a spider's web that she had spun to catch the long-winged flies that swarm from the cellar's damp, dusky corners each sunset that sent a golden shaft of light through the window.

The gossamer threads hung thick with struggling victims.

Lurking in a dusky, mildewed crevice overhead, I caught sight of the spider sharply watching her net, ready to pounce on her victims when the sunset light should fade in the window and the cell again be in darkness.

With a brisk sweep of a broom I swept down the cunning trap of glistening threads, wishing, oh, so earnestly, as easily might be destroyed the gilded, glistening snares, saloons, dance halls, gin shops, and all like traps that Satan's helpers cunningly lay in delusive golden lights to snare our boys and girls.

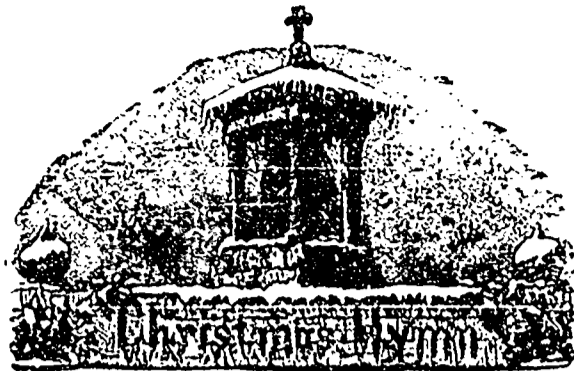
When Cyrus Hamlin was ten or eleven years old, his mother gave him seven cents when going to celebrate muster-day. The money was for gingerbread, buns, etc. "Perhaps, Cyrus," said she, "you will put a cent or two into the missionary contribution-box at Mrs. Farrar's." As he trudged along he began to ask, "Shall I put in one cent or two? I wish she had not said one or two." He decided on two. Then conscience said, "What, five cents for your stomach and two for the heathen! Five for gingerbread and two for souls!" So he said four for gingerbread and three for souls. But presently he felt it must be three for gingerbread and four for souls. When he came to the box he dumped in the whole seven, to have no more bother about it. When he went home, hungry as a bear, he explained to his mother his unreasonable hunger; and, smiling through tears, she gave him a royal bowl of bread and milk. And he pathetically asks: "What was the meaning of mother's tears?"

Flour thrown upon burning paraffin will instantly extinguish it.

One hundred and twenty firemen are required to feed the furnaces of a first-class Atlantic steamer.

There is a house in Paris occupied by over fifty tenants who for twenty years have never paid any rent, the landlord being unknown.

It is claimed that during the last twenty-five years but one person for every 3,500,000 carried by the railroads of Denmark has been killed.



### The Christ-Child.

Once a baby in a manger,  
Willingly from heaven exiled,  
Came—a missionary stranger,  
Clad in flesh like any child;  
Came to show how love is able,  
With no frescoed walls or dome,  
To transform a lowly stable  
To a noble Christian home.

He, the King of light and glory,  
Left his Father's throne above,  
To fulfil the wondrous story  
Propheesied of Jesus' love.  
Thus, to be a Mediator,  
Whereby man is reconciled  
To the will of his Creator,  
Came this missionary child.

Lived and toiled, was scourged and smitten,

On the cross was sacrificed,  
Thus fulfilling what was written,  
By the prophets of the Christ.  
Tenderer heart than that of woman,  
Folds within this sacred bud;  
Outward form so very human,  
Inward life the life of God!

Making childhood fair and holy,  
Its environments though rude,  
"Prince of Peace" was cradled lowly  
Stars sang his beatitude.  
Though the taint of sin it may be  
All humanity's defiled,  
Christ's atonement saves each baby,  
Ransoms every little child.

And we look on baby faces  
With a sort of holy awe,  
Christ has given them his graces,  
And redeemed them from the law.  
How'er hopeful death-beds may be,  
Still corrosive doubts will chafe;  
But when dies the precious baby  
We are sure that he is safe.

Little soldier, just enlisted,  
Practiced briefly at his drill,  
Ne'er denied his Lord; resisted  
Never once his captain's will.  
When your heart is sadly aching,  
Let this thought your comfort be:  
Safe with him who said, when taking,  
"Suffer such to come to me."

Living children yet may sting you,  
Walk the paths by sinners trod;  
Peace this little one shall bring you,  
Safely housed at home with God.  
Funds may fall on which you reckon;  
Living friends may faithless prove;  
Let the baby hands which beckon,  
Bind you to a Saviour's love.

### "NOT A GIRLS' SCHOOL."

In these days of public water-works, when city boys hardly know what a pump looks like, it is hard to believe what difficulty our grandfathers had to get their wash water. Miss Agnes Repplier, writing of English schoolboys early in the century, gives an amusing picture of their winter discomforts:

"Only sixty years have passed since the boys of Eton ventured to beg that pipes might be laid in some of the school buildings so that they need not fetch water from the pumps in the freezing winter weather, and the petition was promptly rejected, with the scornful comment that 'they would be wanting gas and Turkey carpets next!' At Winchester, another big English school, all the lads had to wash in an open yard called 'Moab,' where half a dozen tubs were ranged around the wall, and it was the duty of one of the juniors to go from tub to tub on frosty mornings and thaw the ice with a candle. Comfort was deemed a bad thing for boys, lest they should grow up dainty and unmanly. 'Cold?' said Dr. Keate, a famous headmaster of Eton, to a poor little bit of humanity whom he met shivering and shaking in the hall. 'Don't talk to me of being cold! You must learn to bear it, sir! You are not at a girls' school!'"