



## LESSON II.—JANUARY 14, 1906.

## The Wise Men Find Jesus.

Matt. ii., 1-12.

## Golden Text.

My son, give me thine heart.—Prov xxiii., 6.

## Home Readings.

Monday, January 8.—Matt. ii., 1-12.

Tuesday, January 9.—Matt. ii., 13-23.

Wednesday, January 10.—Gen. xlv., 8-17.

Thursday, January 11.—I. Kings x., 1-13.

Friday, January 12.—Ps. lxxii., 1-20.

Saturday, January 13.—Is. lx., 1-10.

Sunday, January 14.—Is. lx., 11-22.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

Uneasily rested the head that wore the crown in Judea, for that crown had been obtained by usurpation; it had been retained by a long series of assassinations. No wonder that when news was carried to the old Idumean of the arrival of some eastern astrologists, who were inquiring for the native-born king, a troubled look, mixed with jealous hatred crossed the tyrant's face. He had embellished his capital with a luxurious palace and a superb temple; had propped his throne with consummate skill, and his greatest ambition now was that he should be counted the founder of an imperishable dynasty. Who, then, was this aspirant for his scepter, whom these strangers already dared to style King of the Jews? The ruling passion was strong in death. Though trembling on the edge of eternity, Herod began whetting the poniard which had stood him in hand through his long career.

The city shared in the perturbation of the palace; though, of course, for different reasons. It was at once feared that the suspicion of the existence of a rival would cause fresh and even more cruel reprisals. It would be the excuse for the infliction of heavier burdens by the hateful old usurper. Then, too, odious as Herod was, the people were not prepared to receive a prince who should rule in righteousness. Their own manner of life would not bear the light of His countenance. So those who ought to have hailed the 'starred wizards' with joy, were only troubled at their coming. Truth is, Jerusalem had lost its religion. It was thoroughly materialistic, and no longer Messiah-aspiring. It would rather have a prince who would break the Roman yoke than one who would save it from its sins and open to it the kingdom of heaven.

On the dark background of Herod's murderous jealousy and Jerusalem's cold indifference, the moral earnestness of the Magi shines with a pleasing lustre. From their home a thousand miles in the east they came, not prompted merely by the vague expectation of a Saviour which was abroad in the heathen world at that time, nor the faint hints found in their own sacred books. No doubt they first learned of the Messiah through some Jews of the Dispersion. In a borrowed scroll they read of Him of whom Moses and the prophets spoke. To minds prepared for it, and eyes watching for it, the star in the east appeared. Their obedience to the heavenly vision was instantaneous. Going to do homage to a king, they must needs carry kingly gifts—links of gold and tears of frankincense and myrrh.

That they were not swerved from their purpose by the indifference of Jerusalem to the Advent of the Messiah, is new evidence of their thorough-going seriousness. To find such skepticism at the very seat of the Hebrew faith was enough to dash their zeal. But

it did not. To be pointed to a mean, little, straggling Judean hamlet as the possible place of the Nativity, to actually find the Babe in the meanest place that mean village afforded—none of these things moved the star-led Magi. Great was their faith.

This thousand-mile triumphal progress of faith reaches its golden climax in an act of worship. In attitude of loving reverence they presented the heart's adoration, always richer than oblation or gift.

## ANALYSIS AND KEY.

I.—Herod: Effect of quest of Magi upon him. Ambition to found a dynasty which should survive him.

Jealous of a rival.

II.—Jerusalem: Perturbation on account of rival to Herod.

His reprisals feared.

City not ready to receive a king who should rule in righteousness.

III.—Magi: Their moral earnestness in contrast.

One thousand-mile journey.

To watching eye star appears.

Kingly gifts for a king.

Indifference of Jerusalem does not daunt them, nor does mean place of Nativity.

Adoration.

## THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

Seeking Jesus is the highest practical wisdom. All who seek him are Magi in the best sense of the word. And it is no difficult task to find him. No thousand-mile journey confronts us. No going up to heaven or down to hades, for the Word is nigh. But we shall not find him unless we have the same moral earnestness the Magi showed. . . . The Magi are the ideal seekers after Christ. They made it their business to find Him. They might have said: 'This one thing we do.' They left home, business, society and all to find Him of whom Moses and the prophets spoke. They were not daunted by well-nigh insurmountable obstacles. They persevered. They did not fall out by the way, though it were a thousand miles long. And when they found Jesus at length, they believed in him. . . . In a sense we come to a larger Christ than the Magi found. They discovered a Babe, we the full-grown Christ, whose finished work and righteousness is our hope for time and eternity. . . . It is largely a matter of sentiment, the finding of a spiritual significance in the various gifts which the Magi brought. They gave just the best they had, the choicest things their far-off country produced. We may well imitate their example. . . . The skulls of the Magi, blazing in gems, are displayed in the crypt in the cathedral at Cologne. Each skull is crowned with a diadem, and the name of the wearer is written in rubies upon it. Such literalism is unfortunate. The spirit of the Magi is far more important than their bones. . . . According to the character of each, what is good news to one is evil to another. What blessed tidings to Magi and shepherds were the evillest possible to Herod and the Pharisees. Character is still, and in every house, the true touchstone.

## WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT ABOUT MONEY AND ITS USE.

The young man who asked Jesus about how he could inherit eternal life, was negatively good. He had not committed adultery, or killed, or stolen, or bore false witness. Jesus admired his innocence. But in the flash of one word, he revealed a whole realm of active, disinterested service for others of whose very existence to that moment the young man had been ignorant. Sell and give! That was the crux. Not immediately, perhaps never, did this negatively innocent person become positively and aggressively good in the sense of service for others. Yet that is the very heart of the religion Jesus taught and exemplified. Only by following Him in such service can any one have true treasure. Riches are dross without the spirit of service.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Jan. 14.—Topic—What Christ taught about money and its uses. Matt. ii., 11; Mark x., 17-31.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## LIKE OTHER PEOPLE.

Monday, Jan. 8.—War with the Philistines. I. Sam. vii., 7-14.

Tuesday, Jan. 9.—Samuel the judge. I. Sam. vii., 15-17.

Wednesday, Jan. 10.—What the people wanted. I. Sam. viii., 1-5.

Thursday, Jan. 11.—What God said. I. Sam. viii., 6-9.

Friday, Jan. 12.—Samuel's advice. I. Sam. viii., 10-18.

Saturday, Jan. 13.—They rejected God. I. Sam. x., 19.

Sunday, Jan. 14.—Topic—Wanting to be like other people. I. Sam. viii., 19, 20.

## Eleven Rules for Teachers.

1. Prepare each lesson by fresh study.
2. Seek in the lesson its analogies and likenesses to other truths.
3. Study the lesson until its thoughts take shape in familiar language. Clear speech is the proof and product of clear thought.
4. Find the natural order and connection of the facts and truths.
5. Seek the relation of the lesson to the lives and duties of the pupils.
6. Use aids, but never rest until the truth arises clear before your own eyes.
7. Search for all facts. Master some. Make one truth your very own.
8. Have a regular time for study.
9. Have a plan of study, but study beyond the plan.
10. Secure the help of the best scholars and thinkers through their books.
11. Talk over your lesson with an intelligent friend.

—'Sunday School Times.'

Every Sunday school should have a Home Department Superintendent who will give his personal time and attention to this particular phase of work. He should direct the visitors in their delivery of lesson helps and the collection of reports and offerings as well as stimulate home study, class spirit and enthusiasm. It will reward every true effort.—'Sunday School Teacher.'

## 'The Milk' of the Word.

Some parents are very careful about the growth of their children's bodies, and do their best to supply them with the right kind of food to that end. Are we equally anxious about the spiritual development of those whom God has committed to our care, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Simple food is the kind best suited to the child's body, and simple nourishment, the 'milk' of the Word, is the kind for their young minds to feed upon, and by God's blessing lead to their spiritual quickening.

Does some one ask, What is the milk of the Word? My experience leads me to say that, for children, it is simple Bible stories. Before they can read for themselves these stories, simply told, with a few words of explanation or application, have a wonderful interest. This has been abundantly proved to me by the oft-repeated request, 'Daddy, tell us a Bible story?' What is the result? What does it lead to—this milk of the Word? In the first place, a softening influence. They are more ready to obey. They do not pretend to explain it, but the fact remains, and has been marked by outsiders before knowing the reason. Another result is, it leads them to read the Bible for themselves, as soon as they are old enough, and who shall say how great the value to the child—to the future man—of these early impressions of the Word of God?

Who shall say how often it shall talk with them by the way in trying days to come? One thing leads to another, and I could speak of some joining the visible Church of Christ with the hope of one day being used in the ministry.

What a different history of Israel might have been written had they obeyed the command of Deut. vii., 7, to teach God's word diligently to the children!—Selected.