



LESSON.—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1908.

### Christmas Lesson.

Luke ii., 8-20. Memory verses 8-10, or I. Kings xi., 4-13.

### Golden Text.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke ii., 11.

### Home Readings.

Monday, December 14.—Luke ii., 8-20.  
 Tuesday, December 15.—Isa. ix., 1-7.  
 Wednesday, December 16.—Matt. ii., 1-12.  
 Thursday, December 17.—John i., 1-18.  
 Friday, December 18.—Rev. iii., 9-20.  
 Saturday, December 19.—Rev. v., 1-14.  
 Sunday, December 20.—Rev. vii., 9-17.

#### FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Although there is the option of teaching either a combination of the two lessons for to-day or dealing with the New Testament Christmas story alone, it would be better in all probability with the younger classes to teach only the Christmas lesson. For one thing, their hearts and thoughts will at this season be full of the approaching day, and it would be difficult to take their minds off it, and certainly nothing could be more beautiful and profitable for this half hour on Sunday with the children than the sweet old story of the Babe of Bethlehem, the shepherds, and the angels. The little ones could almost tell it to you yourselves but they do not tire of hearing it, nor of being told why it is that on Christmas Day we give each other gifts. Try, however, to impress on their hearts something more than the mere beauty of the story, some idea of what God has given us in giving His Son as our Saviour, and some thought of what we must give to God in grateful return for His love to us.

#### FOR THE SENIORS.

It will be interesting to take up in the older and more thoughtful classes a combination of the two lessons, the one of the need of a Saviour evidenced in Solomon's downfall and the other, the finding of a Saviour in the coming of Jesus, the Son of Mary, a member of the same royal house to which Solomon himself belonged. Solomon's is the failure of the greatest of worldly advantages and pleasures to bring satisfaction (Eccles. ii., 1-1) or even what the world would consider complete success. There is much talk to-day of exercising 'the broad spirit of Christian tolerance' and some see in Solomon's allowing his various wives to practice the rites each of her own religion an example of this to some degree. If so, then such an example would be a strong condemnation of the policy of broad tolerance, for it ended in moral and rational ruin. Solomon may have honestly sought to secure the peace of his people by an alliance with the forces of this world, but he directly disobeyed God to do it and such schemes of doing evil that good may come, will always fail. No evil must be condoned or tolerated, but an unflinching enmity against the forces of evil need not destroy that good-will which the Saviour came to bring. Solomon may have tried to gain peace by an alliance with the evil powers in this world, but Christ came to give the true peace that can only come by placing oneself on the side of God against all evil. Against the forces of evil Christ Jesus came 'not to bring peace, but a sword,' amid all the joy of this happy season the thoughtful man can not fail to see and hear the misery of those who are suffering in the bondage of sin and the Christmas spirit of love and good-will is at one with the Christian spirit of enmity against the forces that keep poor humanity bound.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE'.)

'The birth of Jesus is the sunrise of the Bible,' says Dr. Henry Van Dyke. 'Towards

this point the aspirations of the prophets and the poems of the psalmists were directed, as the heads of flowers are turned towards the dawn. From this point a new day began to flow very silently over the world—a day of faith and freedom, a day of hope and love. When we remember the high meaning that has come into human life, and the clear light that has flooded softly down from the manger-cradle in Bethlehem of Judea, we do not wonder that mankind has learned to reckon history from the birthday of Jesus, and to date all events by the years before or after the Nativity of Christ.'

Verse 9. 'An angel of the Lord, and the glory of the Lord.' We are sure that the credibility of the miraculousness of the Advent will be more clear to us if we have really felt how vast was the importance and how great was the necessity of the event. If ever miracle might be let loose out of the rigid hand of law, when should it be but now, when the King of all the laws is coming in His personality? If there are angels, now certainly is the time for them to appear. If the stars can ever have a message and lead men, now is the time when their ministry can plead its strongest warrant. If ever the thin veil between the natural and the supernatural may break asunder, it must be now, when the supernatural power enters into eternal life and God is present among the sons of men. To any one who believes in the possibility of miracle at all, and who knows what the meaning of the Incarnation is, the wonder would be if it had no miraculous accompaniment. The breakage through the ordinary laws of nature's life seems natural and fitting, as when a king passes through a city, we expect to hear trumpets and cannon replace the common sounds of trade and domestic life, which are all that its streets commonly echo.—Brooks.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking whether your friends love you and ask yourself whether you love them enough to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed Life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you can keep it for a day, why not always—

But you can never keep it alone.

—Henry Van Dyke, The Spirit of Christmas.

For somehow, not only for Christmas, but all the long year through, The joy that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you; And the more you spend in blessing the poor and the lonely and sad, The more of your heart's possessing, returns to make you glad.

### Bible References.

Luke i., 32, 33; I. John iv., 9; John i., 14; Isa. ix., 6; Matt. i., 21; Rom. vi., 23; I. Cor. ix., 15.

### C. E. Topic.

Sunday, December 20.—Topic—Why was the King born? John xviii., 33-37. (A Christmas meeting.)

### Junior C. E. Topic.

Monday, December 14.—The women with spices. Mark xvi., 1.

Tuesday, December 15.—The stone rolled away. Mark xvi., 2-4.

Wednesday, December 16.—The women tell the story. Luke xxiv., 9-11.

Thursday, December 17.—Peter and John at the tomb. John xx., 3-9.

Friday, December 18.—Report of the guards. Matt. xxviii., 11-15.

Saturday, December 19.—His appearance to Mary. Mark xvi., 9, 10.

Sunday, December 20.—Topic—The resurrection story. Matt. xxviii., 1-10.

### Religious News.

A returned missionary from Korea relates an incident of a devoted native Christian who, in order to complete a church, sold his ox for 30 yen (\$15), and afterward the plowing was done by himself and brother drawing the plow, while the father held the handles. The Rev. J. O. Reavis, in an address in the First Presbyterian Church, Selma, Ala., related this incident, and it made a deep impression upon the audience as a testimony of the desire of the Christians in Korea to help themselves and to make sacrifices. Following the service a gentleman met the pastor of the church on the street. Giving him \$15, he said that he wanted that man to have his ox again, and requested that the Korean Christian be found and given the money. Mr. Reavis at once wrote to the Rev. William M. Junkin, of Korea, and his reply enclosed a letter from the Rev. J. Hunter Wells, M.D., superintendent of the Caroline A. Ladd Hospital at Pyeng Yang, which gives the information that the man has been found. From Dr. Wells' letter we take the following:—

'The man, named Pai Ni Il, lived in 1900 in a community where the people were unable to complete the building of a church. It seemed impossible to get the additional money needed. This devoted Korean Christian sold his bullock to get the money, and the church was completed. After selling his ox he and his brother got into the traces, while his old father directed the plow, and so they tilled the fields. Pai Ni Il now lives at a place about 250 li south of Pyeng Yang, and is a Methodist preacher doing excellent work.'

Dr. Wells says: 'This story is strengthened by the exact way in which we can trace it to its source, and also in ascertaining that the man is now engaged in Christian work. The gift of \$15 will do more than merely reimburse the man, for I believe that when it is known in the districts where the man visits it will be a veritable cruise-of-oil sort of gift, and will be for the glory of God.'—The 'Missionary.'

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