

CHRISTMAS.

"Christmas is coming!" the children cry. Counting the weeks that are hurrying by— Dear little children, who live at home, And do not guess what it is to roam From morn to night, with stockingless feet, Up and down through the ice and sleet.

"Christmas is coming!" thinks little Tim; But what can the Christmas do for him? His home is a cellar, his daily bread The crumbs that remain when the rich are fed;

No mother to kiss when the day is done; No place to be glad in under the sun.

That wonderful fellow, old "Santa Claus," Who never is idle a moment, because He is kept so busy with piling the toys Into the stockings of rich girls and boys, No wonder he sometimes forgets, you know, Into the homes of the poor to go.

But, dear little children, you understand That the rich and the poor all over the land Have one dear Father who watches you, And grieves or smiles at the things you do; And some of his children are poor and sad, And some are always merry and glad.

Christmas will bring to some of you joys, Food and plenty, frolic and toys; Christmas to some will bring nothing at all;

In place of laughter the tears will fall. Poor little Tim to your door may come; Your blessings are many; spare him some.

The Christmas bells will sweetly ring The songs that the angels love to sing, The song that came with the Saviour's birth,

"Peace, good-will, and love on earth." Dear little children, ring, I pray, Sweet bells in some lonely heart that day.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, FROM ELIJAH TO ISAIAH.

LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 25.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE (CHRISTMAS LESSON).

ISA. 9. 1-7. Memorize verses 6, 7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9. 6.

THE LESSON STORY.

More than seven hundred years before our Lord came into the world to redeem us, Isaiah saw him coming. Now and then through all his wonderful prophecies would break a saying about him that was like light from behind a cloud. There were many clouds, because of the sins of the people, yet the light behind them grew

brighter and brighter until at last they were—like clouds in a great sunset—bright with the glory of the Lord. He saw not only the time of the coming of Christ, and his sufferings and death, as we may read in the fifty-third chapter, but he looked far, far beyond to one time, and saw the nations of the earth coming to him "as doves to their windows," and a time still beyond us when there would be "a new heaven and a new earth," and our eyes should "see the king in his beauty" as well as in his humiliation. He tried to tell us the name of the Redeemer who should come to Zion, and, because he knew that he would be God as well as man, he gave us the five names in our Golden Text: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," and then of him he said, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

We know that all the first part of Isaiah's prophecies have come true, for the Lord was born of a virgin, as he said, and his kingdom is spreading over all the earth, and we will look joyfully for the day when the whole earth will be his, and all men shall love him.

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGEST.

Why did God send prophets? To carry his word to the world.

What did he at last do? He came himself.

How do you get his word now? Through the Bible and preaching.

What was Isaiah? A great prophet. Of what did he tell? The birth and death of Christ.

What else? The spread of his kingdom.

Does history show us that his words were true? Yes.

What did he say many things about? The far future.

What did he see? All the world redeemed from sin.

What does he call it? A "new heaven and a new earth."

What is said of that kingdom? It shall have no end.

What is this day? The birthday of the King.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 1.

CHRIST THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF MEN. John 1. 1-18. Memorize verses 1-4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.—John 1. 4.

THE LESSON STORY.

Did you ever think how much easier it is to think about Jesus as he lived among men than it is to think about him as God among his angels in his glorious heaven?

He knew that this would be hard for us, and that is why he came to live among us and make us acquainted with himself. He can always look upon us and within us, but he came that we might look upon him, follow him, love him. John tells us about this as he begins his gospel, and yet the truth in it is not John's, but is the Lord's own word to us. Many people say of these verses, "This is my creed, or faith," because it is so full of the truth about Jesus. He is called the "Word" because he was God's voice to men; and it is said of him that he was in the beginning, that he was God's voice to men; and it is said that he made all things. This is said that we might be sure that he is divine, and can save us from sin. He was the Life and Light of men, though when he came into their darkness of mind they did not know him and turn to him. There was another John, called the Baptist, who had been sent to preach about the coming of the Saviour of the world. The people turned to him, but they could not at first understand what the Life and the Light was, because it was spiritual. So the Lord came to his own, but his own received him not, except a few men who began to believe on him, and to these he gave power to become the sons of God. At first they were disciples, but they were afterward apostles, or missionaries.

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGEST.

Who was the writer of our lesson? The Apostle John? Who told him what to write? The Spirit of God. Can you see God? No. Why did he come to earth as a man? That we might see and hear him. Did men believe in him? A few only. What were they called? Disciples, or learners. What did they become? Missions. "he was God." What else is he called? the Word? He was God's voice to men. What does the lesson say of him? That "he was God." What else is he called? Life and Light of men. What power did he give to his disciples? To become the sons of God. Does he still give that power to men? Yes.

A missionary, who travelled up the Zambezi a few months ago, tells that on one occasion a company of natives gathered in front of his hut and began an animated discussion. This grew hotter and hotter, till presently a fire was kindled and a large pot of water was set on it. "I was told," said he, "that this was a trial for witchcraft, and that the two persons charged had to wash their hands in the boiling water, and if the skin came off after twenty-four hours, the victims were to be burned alive. First one, then, the other dipped his hands in the fiercely boiling water, lifting some up and pouring it over the wrist. Twenty-four hours told its tale, and I saw the poor fellows marched off to be burned before a howling, cursing mob."