

The Junior Epworth Era

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A Christmas Carol

"What means this glory round our feet?"
The angel mused, "more bright than morn."

And voices chanted clear and sweet,
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

"What means that star?" the shepherds said,
"That brightens through the rocky glen?"

And angels, answering overhead,
Sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

'Tis eighteen hundred years and more
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;
We wait for Him, like them of yore;
Alas, He seems so slow to come!

But it was said, in words of gold,
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,
That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to Him.

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw,
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet life which is the law.

So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then,
And, clasping kindly hand in hand,
Sing, "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

But they who do their souls no wrong,
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angel song,
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

—James Russell Lowell.

Weekly Topics

DEC. 20.—CHRIST'S LAST WORDS TO HIS DISCIPLES. Matt. 28. 16, 20.

How long was it after Christ's resurrection that He ascended into heaven? Forty days. Acts 1. 3.

During these six weeks, to whom did Christ show himself? His apostles and others of His disciples. Acts 1. 3; 1 Cor. 15. 6.

Of what did He talk to them during these visits? The things of the Kingdom of God. Acts 1. 3.

What plan had He for this Kingdom? Its growth through all the world. Matt. 28. 19.

How was it to be spread among all nations? By the preaching of the apostles and their successors. Mark 16. 15.

What other word besides "preach" did Jesus use? "Teach." Matt. 28. 19.

What did Jesus call His disciples as working for the spread of His kingdom? "Witnesses." Luke 24. 48; Acts 1. 8.

What did He tell them to do before they commenced their work of witnessing? "Wait." Acts 1. 4; "Tarry." Luke 24. 49.

Why "wait" and "tarry"? For the Holy Spirit. John 14. 16.

What did they need the Holy Spirit for? "Power." Acts 1. 8; Luke 24. 49. What promise did Jesus give them to cheer and help them in their work as "witnesses"? His continual presence. Matt. 28. 20.

Was the Holy Spirit given? Yes! Acts 2. 1-4.
What followed? Many wonderful works. Mark 16. 20; Acts 2. 41; Acts 5. 12.

DEC. 27.—MISSIONARY MEETING. (See page 377.)

JAN. 3, 1909.—CHRIST'S WITNESSES. Acts 1. 4-11.

When Christ called His disciples to be His "witnesses," what did He mean? That they were to make Him known to others.

Tell two things of every witness. 1st. He must know; 2nd. He must tell what he knows.

What did the followers of Jesus "know"? That He was risen from the dead, that He was able to forgive sins, that He was more than a Jewish king, that He was to be a universal Saviour.

What did they "tell"? All they knew. What was the result? Many believed, the church wonderfully grew, and the enemies of the Lord and of His disciples started a persecution to destroy the new sect.

What did the apostles say in these times of trial? Acts 3. 20.

Did they continue witnessing? Yes! Acts 3. 33.

Did success follow them? Yes! Acts 5. 14; Acts 6. 7.

Has the time of witnessing ceased? No, nor will it until Christ's command is fulfilled. Acts 1. 8.

(These studies in the early church give the most favorable opportunity to instruct the Juniors in the principles for which the Church exists—the extension of the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. These foundation principles still exist, and we are as truly working

them out in West China as the early apostles did in Judea or Samaria. Make it very clear that "witnessing" is obligatory on every Christian, that it is the one universal and constant duty of every disciple. Unless our missionary work is presented as the one supreme and vital obligation of the whole Church, we cannot expect interest in it to be maintained, or support of it to be loyal or long continued.)

JAN. 10.—A GOOD PRAYER-MEETING. Acts 1. 12-14.

These verses give us a glimpse into the life of the little community of disciples in those days immediately following our Lord's ascension into heaven. He had told them to "tarry," to "wait" for the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit. They did so, and we may surely learn some things to help us still in our prayer-meetings: (1) They were all there, (2) With one desire, (3) They continued; though the promise seemed delayed, they did not tire, (4) They expected; they had come with a definite purpose and they kept looking for God to do His part, (5) They encouraged one another. Apostles, disciples, men, women, they cheered one another, and strengthened each other's faith. Such suggestions as these may be made very applicable and helpful to our present prayer-meetings. Do not fail to show how their prayers were answered. The second chapter of Acts tells this. In God's time, in His way, not perhaps just as the disciples expected; but with full proof of God's power and in fulfillment of Christ's promise, their prayers were answered. All true prayer is answered, none is lost. Therefore let us pray on and on, and make all our life one long grand prayer to our heavenly Father.

About Christmas

At no other season of the year are people so glad or so anxious to make others glad, as at Christmas. And this is quite right. Of course, we should try to be happy all the time, and to make those about us happy, too, every day; but once a year everybody in our land seems to feel it to be a special duty to do or say or give something that will make others very unusually joyful. And there is no other time so appropriate for this as our Christmas week. For then we are reminded especially of God's greatest gift of love to us. There was a time when Jesus left His heavenly home and came as a new-born Babe, to live and die on the earth, to show how God loved us. We celebrate His birthday at Christmas, and so remind ourselves and others of the most wonderful event the world has ever known. Christmas started with God's gift of love. We celebrate it truly only when we are moved to give presents ready and make them to our friends in the hope of getting others back again. A year ago we heard a girl say, "Well, I gave a nice present, and she didn't give me anything. I guess I'll cut her out next year." Do you know what she meant? Was she right? Give for the sake of getting is not giving at all. It is selfishness. But giving because of a loving spirit is real, true, gen-

uine, heavenly. Do not forget that it is not the money value of a gift that makes it of worth. Not "what to give?" but "why give?" is the main question. We fear that many people give valuable presents who can ill afford them. Don't see how much you can spend, but spend what you can afford as wisely as you can. And remember, girls and boys, that if what you give a loved parent, brother, sister, teacher, or friend represents *you*, and contains a part of you, so much the better. That is why a simple gift that you make yourself is often much more appreciated than a more costly one that you buy. Many an article that cost but a few cents originally is of priceless value now because of sweet memories that are connected with the maker and giver long ago. If we would all remember some of these things, how happy we could make our friends, especially at home. For that is the best place for Christmas joy. No doubt you have been thinking of the coming day, have been planning and preparing for it, and intend to "have a gas time." That you may enjoy it even as our Heavenly Father did on the first Christmas, by sharing your very best with others, is our wish for you all. See how many you can make happy this year, and you will have the happiest Christmas you have ever known.