

**The Magical Door.**

There is a door in the wall of the ages—  
A door that no man sees;  
For the angel who writes in the Book of  
Time,  
Is the keeper of the keys.  
Once in the year it opens,  
At the solemn midnight hour,  
When the children sleep, and the old  
clocks keep  
Awake in the tall church tower.

And then, as it swings on its hinges,  
Whoever might peer inside  
Would catch a glimpse of the centuries,  
That behind the silence hide,  
Egypt, and Rome, and Tyre,  
All in that mythical place,  
Where the old years rest that were once  
possessed  
By the wonderful human race.

The shadowy door swings open,  
And a pilgrim enters in,  
Flowed with a twelve-month's struggle  
In this world of strife and sin.  
Wait him a farewell greeting!  
He will pass no more this way—  
This weary year who must disappear  
In the haven of yesterday.

The door still swingeth open,  
And outward another comes,  
With a stir of banners and bugles  
And the beat of friendly drums.  
His hands are full of beauty—  
The cluster, the song, the sheaf,  
The snowflake's wing, and the budding  
spring,  
And the foam on the crested reef.

This is the New Year, darlings,  
Oh, haste to give him cheer;  
Only the Father knoweth  
The whole of his errand here.  
This is the New Year, darlings,  
A year for work and play,  
For doing our best, and for trusting the  
rest  
To the maker of night and day.  
—From "Little Knights and Ladies."

**LESSON NOTES.**

FIRST QUARTER, 1900.  
**LESSON I.—JANUARY 7.**  
**THE BIRTH OF JESUS.**

Luke 2. 1-16. Memory verses, 8-11.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.—Matt. 1. 21.

**OUTLINE.**

- 1. The Providential Method, v. 1-7.
- 2. The Angelic Message, v. 8-14.
- 3. The Confirmation of the Message, v. 15. 16.

Time.—The very end of B.C. 5 or the early part of B.C. 4.  
Place.—Bethlehem of Judea.

**LESSON HELPS.**

1. "Caesar Augustus"—Caesar was the emperor's title or titular name. "All the world"—The Roman empire, which included continental Europe, the northern shore of Africa (then fertile and teeming with population), and what is now Turkey in Asia. "Taxed"—Registered; he decreed that a census should be taken.

3. "Every one into his own city"—This was a thoroughly Hebrew way of doing things; the "house and lineage" of each man—that is, his family and ancestry—were more valuable to him than gold and silver; and what had been once the ancestral inheritance was always regarded as the family home. The Roman method, unmodified by Jewish prejudices, would have been to enroll each person at his place of residence.

4. "Up"—"Up" in both senses, for his journey was a steady ascent, and led him from a comparatively remote province to the centre of the nation. "The city of David"—Bethlehem, which was David's birthplace. "House and lineage" Better, "house and family."

5. "To be taxed"—"To enroll himself." "His espoused wife"—"Who was betrothed to him."

7. "Swaddling clothes"—At that time the universal clothing of babes; they were long folded bands, tight and unwholesome. "Laid him in a manger"—Probably the stone trough out of which cattle fed. This would be revolting to an American or Englishman, but hardly so to an oriental.

8. "The same country"—The fields around Bethlehem. "Watch over their

stock"—To guard from robbers and wild beasts.

9. "Came upon them"—The words express a sudden, surprising coming.

11. "A Saviour"—One who saves men. "Christ"—The word means "anointed," and is the same as the Hebrew word *Messiah*.

12. "This shall be a sign"—The sign was not miraculous, but the prediction of it was.

13. "Saying"—"It is not clear whether these clauses were sung as a continuous strain, or whether they were heard in single floating fragments, or by alternate responses."—Wheldon.

14. "Glory to God in the highest"—The highest measure of praise for God's great love to men. "On earth peace"—The more fully Christ is accepted among men the greater will be peace. "Good will"—The word used here is one which both our Lord (Matt. 11. 26; Luke 10. 21) and Paul (Eph. 1. 5; Phil. 2. 13) use of the divine will in its aspect of benevolence.

Who accompanied him on the journey?  
What happened while they were at Bethlehem?

Where was the child laid? Why?  
What name was given the child, and why? Matt. 1. 21, 25.

2. The Angelic Message, v. 8-14.  
What night watchmen were on duty near Bethlehem?  
Who suddenly appeared to them?  
Of what were they afraid?  
What did the angel say to comfort them?  
What was his good news?  
What "sign" did he give them?  
Who suddenly joined the angel?  
What was their song of joy?  
Of whose good will was the birth of Jesus a pledge? John 3. 16.

3. The Confirmation of the Message, v. 15, 16.  
Where did the angels go?  
What visit did the shepherds suggest?  
Does this indicate doubt, or faith?

peaceable, gentle, merciful, generous. He ought to take the part of small boys against large ones. He ought to refuse to be a party to mischief, to persecution, to deceit; and, above all things, he ought to show his colours. He need not always be interrupting a game to say that he is a Christian, but he ought not to be ashamed to say that he refuses to do something because it is wrong and wicked, or because he fears God, or is a Christian. He ought to take no part in the ridicule of sacred things, but meet the ridicule of others with a bold statement that for the things of God he feels the deepest reverence.

**A Prayer for the New Year.**

Dear Master, for this coming year  
Just one request I bring;  
I do not pray for happiness,  
Or any earthly thing;  
I do not ask to understand  
The way thou leadest me;  
But this I ask: Teach me to do  
The thing that pleaseth thee.

A quiet lot in life is mine,  
Made up of little things;  
Teach me to do as unto thee  
The duties each day brings.  
Faithful in that which is the least,  
Dear Master, I would be,  
Thus making all my daily work  
The thing that pleaseth thee.

**A FINE LINE OF**

**Children's Books**

In Illuminated Board Covers

- At 2½c. each, postage 3c. extra
- In the Country**  
Bright stories and pictures for the little folks
- In Cupboard Land**  
Picture Book.
- Little Alice and Her Brave Puppy**  
Full of pictures.
- Fun on the Ice**  
Sparkling stories for boys and girls. Fully illustrated.
- Dot's Valentine**  
Bright stories for little folks.  
At 15c. each, postage 5c. extra.
- Papa's Darlings**  
Books of pictures and stories.
- Merry Times**  
For bright little girls and boys.
- Dolly's Visitors and their Merry Doings**
- Furs and Feathers**  
Stories of birds and animals.
- Dear Little Pet's Story Book**  
In large type.
- What a Beauty**  
Santa Claus story-book.  
At 20c. each, postage 7c. extra
- Pussy's Party and Their Merry Doings**  
Potty pictures and bright stories.
- Gracie's Pets**  
Bright pictures and stories.
- Nelly and Fido**  
Stories for happy times.  
At 25c. each, postage 9c. extra
- Butterfly Days**  
Vacation fun.
- Under the Mistletoe**  
Stories and pictures for the little folks.
- Minnie's Playfellows**  
Bright stories for young folks. Fully illustrated.
- Merry Pranks**  
Fun and frolic for little folks. Fairy tales.



**Ring Out the Old.**

Ring, New Year bells, ring loud and clear,  
With merry peals so full of cheer,  
Ring in the boy that's first at school,  
Ring out the dunce-block and the fool,  
Ring in the boy that's bright as day,  
That loves to work and loves to play.  
Ring out the idler and the drone,  
Ring out the grumblers every one,  
Ring out the boy who will not lend

A willing hand to help a friend.  
Ring in new school-books and new toys.  
Ring out all things that ruin boys.  
Ring out the smoker and the smoke,  
Ring out old habit's ugly yoke,  
Ring out the swearer from the street,  
Ring out the fighter and the cheat.  
Ring out the child that doesn't care,  
Ring in good children everywhere.

15. "Let us now go"—Words not of doubt, but of trust. "Even unto Bethlehem"—Probably no very great distance.

16. "Found"—The word means discovered after search.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. The birth of Jesus.—Luke 2. 1-9.
- Tu. The birth of Jesus.—Luke 2. 10-20.
- W. Simeon's prophecy.—Luke 2. 25-35.
- Th. Mary's thanksgiving.—Luke 1. 46-55.
- F. The Divine Word.—Heb. 1. 1-9.
- S. Divinity and humanity.—John 1. 1-14.
- Su. The Saviour.—1 John 4. 7-14.

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.**

- 1. The Providential Method, v. 1-7.  
Of what decree does the lesson tell, and by whom was it issued?  
Who then ruled in Syria?  
Where did the people go for their taxing?  
From what city and province did Joseph come?  
Where did he go to be taxed?  
Why did he go to Bethlehem?

What did they find when they came?  
When should we see 'cous? Isa. 55. 6.

**PRACTICAL TEACHING.**

- Where in this lesson are we shown—
- 1. The fulfilment of prophecy?
- 2. That angels are interested in our welfare?
- 3. That God's glory is man's highest good?

**A BOY'S RELIGION.**

If a boy is a lover of the Lord Jesus Christ, says a wise writer, though he can't lead a prayer-meeting, or be a church officer or a preacher, he can be a godly boy, in a boy's way and a boy's place. He ought not to be too solemn or too quiet for a boy. He need not cease to be a boy because he is a Christian. He ought to run, jump, play, climb, and shout like a real boy. But in all he ought to be free from vulgarity and profanity. He ought to eschew tobacco in every form, and have a horror of intoxicating drinks. He ought to be

**Rhymes, Stories, and Singing Games**

- Children's Singing Games**  
Illustrated and arranged by Eleanor Wither Willard. Quarto, cloth..... \$1 00
- Child-Stories and Rhymes**  
For the little people of nursery and kindergarten. Quarto, cloth..... 1 25
- Rhymes and Songs for My Little Ones**  
By Adolphine Charlotte Hingst and Esther J. Huskey. Illustrations by George W. Picknell. Quarto, cloth... 1 25
- Nursery Finger Plays**  
For nursery and kindergarten. By Emilio Poulsson. Illustrated by L. J. Bridgman. Music by Cornelia C. Roeske. Quarto, cloth..... 1 25

**WE PAY POSTAGE**

**WILLIAM BRIGGS,**

Methodist Book and Publishing House,  
Toronto.  
C. W. Carter, Montreal. S. F. Heston, Halifax.