

The Quiet Hour.

A Christmas Lesson.

Luke 2: 8-20. Commit to memory vs. 10, 11.
Read Isa. 9: 1-7; Heb., ch. 1.

S. S. LESSON—Dec. 28, 1902.

We come once again to the old, familiar Christmas story.

V. 8. Shepherds abiding in the field. Perhaps, like Simeon, (v. 25) these men were "waiting for the consolation of Israel." The selection of this humble order of men was a prophecy of the work of Christ in exalting the lowly. It was from that same duty and from this locality that David was summoned to be the deliverer of Israel.

V. 8. An angel (Rev. Ver.); not the Jehovah angel of Old Testament revelation. The glory of the Lord; like the Shekinah, or cloud in which the Lord appeared above the mercy seat; Ex. 25: 22; Lev. 16: 2. Light is the emblem of God, 1 John 1: 5. Here it shows the divine authority of the angel's message. They were sore afraid; because in the light of God's presence they had a sudden revelation of their sinfulness.

Vs. 10-12. Be not afraid (Rev. Ver.). Compare ch. 1: 13, 30. God's messenger, like God Himself, was quick to see and pity human weakness. Good tidings of great joy; the best news ever heard by men. It is the same word as "gospel." To all the people (Rev. Ver.); all the people of Israel. The Gospel was first for the Jews, who were to send it to the Gentiles. A Saviour; a deliverer from sin and its consequences. Jesus means Saviour; see Matt. 1: 21. Christ the Lord; the Messiah, the Anointed One. A sign; by which they might prove the truth of His words.

Vs. 13, 14. And suddenly; as heavenly visitors are wont to appear. A multitude of the heavenly host; the "hosts" of angels who surround the throne of God, 1 Kings 22: 19; Ps. 103: 21; Matt. 26: 53. Note carefully the arrangement of the angels' song. It consists of two parts of three members each.

1. Glory.... to God.... in the highest.
2. Peace, goodwill.... to men.... on earth.

Vs. 15-17. Let us now go. They made no delay in seeking the Saviour, nor should we. And see; verify for themselves. Which the Lord hath made known unto us. Their faith was remarkable. They did not doubt that the message was from God. God makes known His will to prepared hearts. They came with haste. Their faith is zealous. Found; found everything just as the angel had told them. So God rewarded their faith. They made known. This was the first gospel message borne by men. If one has truly found the Saviour, he yearns to tell others the good news, Acts 4: 20; 1 John 1: 1, 2.

Vs. 18-20. All.....wondered. The news was so good that they could scarce believe it true. Contrast this with the effect in Mary's case, v. 19. More surprise that does not issue in action is apt to pass away easily and be forgotten. But Mary kept all these things. She stored up all these words in her memory. They became treasures to her for life. Pondered them in her heart. While the shepherds published, Mary meditated. She reflected upon the facts, and no doubt compared them with the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, for she

would not, at first, understand the full significance of the events. The shepherds returned; but with a new vision in life, investing their ordinary duties with a higher interest. "Their experience was the best example of the first beatitude," Matt 5: 3. Glorifying and praising God; celebrating the greatness and goodness of God as manifested in the new gift He had sent. A new employment was added to their old, and the music of their song has never died away. Many all over the world will join in it to-day.

Bible Study. One Verse at a Time.

Paper 11.

Isaiah 55: 1.

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

Last week I was advocating the study of one verse of God's word each day instead of a whole chapter. Wishing to help anyone who may have been interested, I now propose during the next few weeks, to deal in the manner suggested, with this glorious chapter of Isaiah, beginning to-day with the first verse. If anyone feels like writing to me on the subject, either in sympathy, criticism or inquiry, I shall be glad to hear from them.

Prayer at the beginning, "Lord, open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." As Jesus Christ was sent into this world on purpose to open blind eyes, it is suspecting Him of being either unable or unwilling to do His appointed work, to offer this prayer without gladly expecting an answer. He will answer and His answer means light on this sacred page.

1st clause, "Ho!"
This is the voice of God the Father Himself; for in this same chapter He speaks in the third person of both the Son and the Holy One of Israel, or the Holy Ghost, verses 4, 5. Our Father who is in heaven calls Ho! or Hullo! to arrest the attention of those who are passing by heedlessly, in danger of missing this chapter and the feast to which it is a summons. Thank God for caring so much that He has sent out this long, loud Ho! sounding through the centuries.

2nd, "Every one that thirsteth": (4th) "And he that hath no money."

These two clauses describe those who are called, and are best studied together. Every one is not called in this verse; it is only the thirsty and those who are toward God, utterly poverty-stricken. Thank God that these two classes are specially invited to the feast. Is there not opportunity for some very close conversation with our God in these two terms of His own word? Can we not through them get such a look into the heart of our Father that our own hearts shall soften and warm?

3rd, "Come ye to the waters."
"What is meant by the word waters? If we do not understand that, the invitation has no meaning. How that question puzzled me in early days! But now it is all clear. This chapter itself explains it further on. "As the rain cometh down—so shall my word be." The rain comes down from heaven with life and refreshing for the thirsty earth, so God's word comes down from heaven with life and refreshing for the thirsty

soul. We are here invited to come to the waters—to come to the word, and drink what we will of it freely, because we are invited.

An old Highlander saw hanging on a kitchen wall, in large letters the words, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust." He pointed to them with desire in his face and said "O if I could only say that!" Why should he not say that? Had he never heard God's "Ho!" to every thirsty soul? and the triple invitation that follows, "Come ye to the waters, come ye, yea come." He had read and heard it all many times, but he had never paused to understand that the waters meant the word of God, and that he was here invited to take the richest word that bubbles up out of that well of living water, and drink it to his own refreshing. He did not understand that this invitation with the arresting "Ho!" in front of it, constituted a God-given warrant to any thirsty soul to take up this very word and sing, with a blessed emphasis on the personal pronouns, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust."

5th, "Come ye"; 6th, "Yea come."
God's urgency to overcome timidity. Thank God for that "Yea." It is strong to overcome the unbelieving Nay that ever springs instinctively from the human heart in view of the offers of God's grace.

7th, "Bring wine and milk."
What is wine? Christ's own word makes that plain. He took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." The wine stands for God's New Covenant of promise, and each single promise in the word of God is only one drop out of that cup of blood-purchased wine. A promise grasped is the best wine to give courage and gladness. There is nothing like it, especially if the covenant held at the back of it is apprehended.

What is milk? Peter makes that plain. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," and "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Milk is that which makes us grow. The knowledge of the Lord is that which makes us grow; therefore, whatever in the word makes us to know our God—that is milk. There is milk everywhere in the word of God. In the narratives. They are full of milk. How we can learn to know our God studying Abraham and Jacob and Joseph! How the history of Moses and Joshua and Samuel and David shine with the revealed glory of the living God! There is milk in the commands and in the promises, and surely in the judgments of God.

8th, "Without money and without price."
These are the published terms. Thank God for these terms. They fit the poorest, and are meant to do so. Thank God for the poverty that makes us willing to buy on those terms.

He who would understand this chapter should see at the beginning that the invitation given is not to the feast of salvation in any vague sense, but that it is to the feast of the word of God, and that it is only through the "diligent" and "appropriating" study of that word that all the precious results spoken of are to be realized. Men have forgotten what the word of God means.

Ottawa Ladies' College, Nov. 29th.

The Bible is the guide book to heaven, and if we really love the Bible, that is one of the best signs that we are on the way to heaven.