



## LESSON XIII.—DEC. 27.

## The Birth of Christ.

Matt. ii., 1-12.

## Golden Text.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Matt. ii., 12.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Dec. 21.—Matt. ii., 1-12.  
 Tuesday, Dec. 22.—Is. ix., 1-7.  
 Wednesday, Dec. 23.—Luke ii., 1-17.  
 Thursday, Dec. 24.—Micah v., 1-15.  
 Friday, Dec. 25.—Luke i., 26-38.  
 Saturday, Dec. 26.—Mal. iii., 1-12.  
 Sunday, Dec. 27.—Is. vii., 10-16.

## OR GENERAL REVIEW.

Psalm ciii.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Ps. ciii., 17.

## HOME READINGS.

Monday, Dec. 21.—II. Sam. vi., 1-12.  
 Tuesday, Dec. 22.—II. Sam. vii., 4-16.  
 Wednesday, Dec. 23.—II. Sam. xv., 1-12.  
 Thursday, Dec. 24.—II. Sam. xviii., 24-33.  
 Friday, Dec. 25.—I. Chron. xxviii., 1-10.  
 Saturday, Dec. 26.—I. Kings iii., 4-15.  
 Sunday, Dec. 27.—I. Kings x., 1-10.

A year ago we were just completing the history of the conquest and settlement of Canaan by Israel, and you will remember that the people had no king at that time, but were, after their settlement in the land, under judges who appeared from time to time to aid them in their difficulties. Israel was surrounded by heathen kingdoms, and soon began to want a king. This desire on their part was displeasing to God, and when the nation asked for a king he protested through Samuel the judge and prophet against such a form of government, but the children of Israel insisting, God yielded to their demand, as it was the only way they could be made to see his wisdom and their own folly.

Let us take up the lives of the first three kings of Israel, in their order, and see what we have learned about them.

## SAUL.

What can you say about the prophet Samuel's character? Were his sons like him? Did they have anything to do with the discontent of the people? At what place did the elders of Israel assemble and ask for a king? How was their request received? Where was the nation assembled when the king was chosen? Upon what tribe did the lot fall? What man in the tribe was then chosen? What man in the tribe was then chosen? What man in the tribe was then chosen? Had it ever been indicated to him before this that he was to rule Israel? What was the one great cause of Saul's downfall? Can you give one or more instances of his disobedience? What tribe or people was Saul commissioned to destroy utterly? Did he do so? For what was he rebuked in this campaign? In fighting against what people did Saul come to his death? What was the exact manner of his death?

## DAVID.

What do you know about David's early life, his tribe, his family, his occupation, his birthplace? Was David the oldest son of Jesse, or the youngest? Who anointed David to be king? What came upon David

when he had been anointed? What great feat of arms did David perform while still a young man? Was he a regular member of the army at this time? What effect did this have in his relations to the people? What effect did it have upon Saul? What form did Saul's jealousy take? What did he seek to do to David? How was David related to Saul? What loyal friend did David have in Saul's own household? Saul was afraid of David; why was this? What step did Saul take to put David out of his presence? How did the people regard David? How did Jonathan show his friendship for David? What do you think of Jonathan's character? How did David behave when he had Saul in his power, and what was his reason? Did David become king over all Israel at once? Who was set up for a rival king, and how long did he reign? What tribe followed Judah? How long did David reign in Hebron over Judah? What important thing, connected with the religion of the people, did David undertake? Where had the ark been for a long time? What disaster occurred while it was being carried toward Jerusalem? How should the ark have been carried? What great building did David wish to put up? Why was he not allowed to do it? What great promise did God make to David about his throne? Whom did he say should build the temple? What double sin did David commit? Was his penitence sincere? Give in brief the account of Absalom's rebellion. Did David rejoice or not over the death of Absalom? How long did he reign?

## SOLOMON.

Was Solomon David's eldest son? Was he proclaimed king before or after his father's death? Why was his accession to the throne hastened? How did the people receive their new king? For what was Solomon especially noted? What did he choose when God gave him the opportunity? At what place did this occur? What great building did Solomon erect? Give some of its characteristics? What king helped him? How long was the temple in building? At what national feast was the temple dedicated? What about the gathering on this occasion? Can you tell something of the exercises? What about the wealth of Solomon and his power and his reign? Who came to see him, and prove his wisdom? Describe her visit.

Next week we take up the New Testament again, the lesson being 'The Boyhood of Jesus.' Luke ii., 40-52.

## C. E. Topic

Sunday, Dec. 27.—Topic—An optimists' missionary meeting. Isa. lx., 1-5.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## THINGS TO DO NOW.

Monday, Dec. 21.—Study the Bible daily. John v., 39.

Tuesday, Dec. 22.—Be brave to do right. Josh. i., 9.

Wednesday, Dec. 23.—Be true to God. I. Sam. xii., 24.

Thursday, Dec. 24.—Be kind. I. Cor. xiii., 4.

Friday, Dec. 25.—Choose Christ. Josh. xxiv., 15.

Saturday, Dec. 26.—A man who put off. Luke ix., 59, 60.

Sunday, Dec. 27.—Topic—Things we ought not to put off. Eccl. xii., 1, 7.

## HOW JOE KELLY KEPT SUNDAY-SCHOOL OPEN ALL WINTER.

(John McMaster, in 'Sunday-school Times'.)

Let me tell you the story of a Sunday-school, and a man with a purpose, that came under my notice many years ago. Our home was in one of the backwoods settlements,—a small town. It was not big enough to support a pastor all the time, and we had to depend on the village Sunday-school for much of the spiritual nourishment we received. There was a church building, but it was out of the way, and it was a hard climb to reach it; so we

built a schoolhouse in the centre of the town, to be more convenient. Here the union Sunday-school met regularly to study the lesson. There was a Bible class for the men, women, and older people, with several grades for the younger classes.

We can never forget the delightful times we spent in that little country schoolhouse. It was a joy in the spring and summer time to be there. But when we had the bad roads in the fall, and winter came with its furious storms and deep snows, and, in some cases, the distances were great, that was the testing time for us. A few faithful men braved the elements, but the discomforts and freezing cold chilled their ardor. The interest lagged, and the serious question came up, 'Shall we close the school in winter?'

This was our condition when a stranger came to our town. He opened a store, and kept a pony for his business. In a short time everyone in town knew Joe Kelly. He was polite, unselfish, and obliging, and, of course, his business increased rapidly. He attended the union Sunday-school, and was much interested in the work. Difficulties seemed to give him an inspiration, and it was his delight to try to overcome them. Obstacles seemed to give a zest to Joe's life, and thus it came to pass that when roads were bad, and snows deep, and howling winds fierce, Joe was equal to the occasion.

On Sunday mornings of such days Joe would pull on his long overstockings and moccasins, give the pony an extra feed of oats, then, when 'hitched up' with a rude box of his own construction, plenty of straw on the bottom and furs on top, Joe would drive round from house to house, and gather up the material necessary to a Sunday-school. When ten o'clock came (the hour for service) all were astonished at the attendance. The meetings that followed the ride on Joe's sleigh were always good ones. Men who would have stayed at home were shamed into going, and there was an added charm and interest on account of the extra exercise.

And so it came about that some of our very best services were on the very stormiest days. Well do I remember a little girl's calling to her mother, 'Mamma, wish it will be stormy on Sunday, so's to get a ride in Joe's sleigh. Thus it was that Joe Kelly solved for us the problem, 'Shall our Sunday-school close in winter?' Afterwards this came to be our motto:

'Tender-handed touch a nettle  
 And it stings you for your pains;  
 Grasp it firm, like men of mettle,  
 And it soft as silk remains.'

## Our Christmas Greeting.

The publishers of the 'Messenger' wish all its readers a very Merry Christmas, and can do so in no better words than those of Miss Nichols in this little poem:—

## 'I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS.'

(L. Adda Nichols, in 'The Michigan Christian Advocate'.)

Because of the song the angels sing,  
 Because of the wonderful message they bring,  
 I wish you a merry Christmas.

Because of the brilliant Bethlehem star  
 That led wise men from the east afar,  
 I wish you a merry Christmas.

Because of their adoration paid  
 To the infant King in the manger laid,  
 I wish you a merry Christmas.

Because all heaven on earth looked down  
 That Christmas night in the ancient town,  
 I wish you a merry Christmas.

Because of the gift from the Father above,  
 Of Christ the Lord and redeeming love  
 I wish you a merry Christmas.

Because for you and for me He came,  
 Salvation to bring in His own dear name,  
 I wish you a merry Christmas.