



LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER. 24.

Christ's Coming Foretold.

Isaiah ix., 2-7. Memory verses 6, 7.
Read Isaiah xl., 1-10.

Golden Text.

'Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'
—Luke ii., 11.

Home Readings.

M. Isa. ix., 1-7.—Christ's coming foretold.
T. Isa. xl., 1-10.—Prince of Peace.
W. Jer. xxiii., 1-6.—The Lord our righteousness.
Th. Isa. xl., 1-11.—Good tidings.
F. Psal. lxxii., 1-17.—A blessed reign.
S. Acts iii., 18-26.—A prophet.
Su. I. Peter i., 1-12.—Testified beforehand.

Lesson Text.

Supt.—2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

School.—3. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy; they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

5. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

7. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The Bible Class.

Prophecies of Christ's Coming.—Gen. iii., 15; xxii., 15-18; Gal. iii., 8, 16; Gen. xlix., 10; Heb. vii., 14; Rev. v., 5; Deut. xviii., 15, 18; Acts iii., 19-26; Psal. ii., 6, 7; Heb. i., 5-10, 13; Psal. xlv., 6, 7; lxxii., 2-19; Isa. liii., 1-12; Jer. xxiii., 5, 6; Dan. ix., 24-27; Zech. vi., 11-13; ix., 9-11; xiii., 1, 2; Mal. iv., 2.

Suggestions.

This is a lesson of joy. Christ's coming to this earth was an event foretold and looked forward to, for thousands of years beforehand. His coming was expected, but when he came, he was not recognized by those who had been most zealously teaching the prophecies of his glory. He came to his own and his own received him not. (John i., 9-11.) The teachers and leaders of the people had taught the prophecies according to their own interpretations; but that did not alter God's truth. God's word stands true forever whether we believe it or not. We can only interpret God's word by the power of his Spirit. (I. Cor. ii., 11-14.)

The coming of Christ to the heart of the individual is an occasion of great joy. The first important event in any life is the moment of the soul's awakening to the realization of God's claim. The first taste of real happiness and joy comes when the soul opens wide its doors for the incoming of the Saviour.

Isaiah prophesies great joy and rejoicing at the time of the Saviour's coming. This passage should be read in the Revised Bible, as the sense is there given more clearly. The third and fifth verses especially are different from the old rendering which gives one rather a confused idea. The Revision reads,—'Thou hast multiplied

the nation, thou hast increased their joy; they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.' This clearly gives the idea of perfect happiness. The fifth verse is,—'For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for a fuel of fire.' This prophesies the state of peace in which the world should be at the coming of the Messiah. And it was fulfilled in that there were no wars going on at the time of his birth. The armor and the garments stained with the battle, should be useful only as fuel to the nations which were at peace.

Christ brings peace as well as joy when he enters our hearts to abide. He it is who is perfect in wisdom, in might, and love. He is the Everlasting Prince of Peace, the Son of God, yet one with God himself.

Lesson Hymn.

To us a Child of hope is born,
To us a Son is given;
Him shall the tribes of earth obey,
Him all the hosts of heaven.

His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
For evermore adored,
The Wonderful, the Counsellor,
The great and mighty Lord!

His power, increasing, still shall spread,
His reign no end shall know;
Justice shall guard His throne above,
And peace abound below.

C. E. Topic.

Dec. 24.—Our royal Brother. Heb. i., 1-9; iii., 6. (A Christmas meeting.)

Junior C. E.

Dec. 24.—How would Christ have us keep Christmas? Psal. xli., 1-3; lxxxi., 1-3. (A Christmas song service suggested.)

Hints to Teachers.

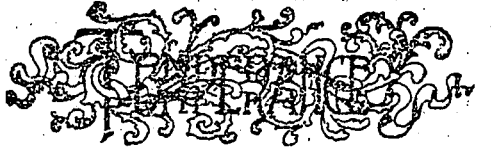
(Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.)

On a late occasion I saw two or three lads who came from a certain young men's class, and one of them pulled out two or three long, beautifully written letters—well-conceived letters—and the writer was his teacher. That teacher is a very busy man. All his time is taken up in a very important situation. I said to myself, 'Can this young gentleman afford so much time from his laborious, mental occupation to write letters to this one boy? I will ask the next one.' 'Does he write to you?' 'Yes, sir, on my birthday; and he writes at other times, too.' 'Have you got any letters?' 'I felt bound to look at this holy correspondence. The letters were full of thought and so well done, that if they were printed they would be worthy of the best magazine in the world. When I found boys, one after another, brought to Christ by these letters, which showed such diligence and care, I did not wonder that the boys were converted. I do not attribute their salvation to the letters themselves, but I do think the Spirit of God was likely to use the man who could thus lay himself out for the salvation of boys.'

Whenever you, that are in trade, find an article pays you increase your stock. If a shop pays you want to take the next shop; you put on a wing, or employ another traveller. Well, brethren, when God blesses you the Spirit of God is manifestly not straitened towards you, and therefore do more; try something else; and let it be your endeavor to utilize to the utmost the blessed power which is poured out upon you. Come, then, let us blend much expectation with our effort. Believe that God is going to bless you. Here is one of the rules of the kingdom: 'According to thy faith, so be it unto thee.' 'If thou believest all things are possible to him that believeth,' but if thou teachest in a dull, doleful manner, not expecting to see any miracle wrought by the Word of the Lord, it may be that the children will go home from the class weary, and then more weary still. Oh! for expectation! If, after class, you say, 'I did expect some girl to stop and talk to me.' If the teacher says, 'I did think one of those boys would be brought to the Saviour,' and if he tells them he would like to see them, and ex-

pects they will come, it is not very long before that very expectation of the teacher will beget a desire in the children, and God will send His blessing.

You will remember an old story told of me, but it is one of the few that are true. If ever you hear anything about me conclude at once that it is a lie, and you will generally be right. This one anecdote is, however, correct. A young brother preached on Tower Hill, and he came to me and wanted comfort. 'I have been preaching these twelve months, and have not seen any conversions.' I answered, 'Do you think that every time you open your mouth God is going to bless you?' He modestly replied, 'No, I do not expect it.' Then I answered him, 'That is the reason you do not get it. God has given you all you expected; you cannot grumble.' He told me afterwards that I set him expecting, and he preached in an expectant way, and very soon God blessed him. If the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened have a large expectancy.



Opium Catechism.

(By Dr. R. H. McDonald, of San Francisco.)

CHAPTER III.—DANGER OF OPIUM.

1. Q.—What is the worst thing about opium?

A.—Its danger.

2. Q.—Why is it dangerous?

A.—Because it is a poison, and taken even in moderate quantity it will produce death.

3. Q.—Is this its chief danger?

A.—No; its chief danger is in the fact that a person who takes it regularly to soothe pain must keep on taking it after the pain is gone, or he will suffer more in other ways than he did at first.

4. Q.—Are the first effects of opium pleasant?

A.—Yes; it seems to act like a charm, and it this lies the first great danger. It closes the weary eyelids, bringing freedom from pain and a feeling of comfort and content. But it soon changes to a dragon that binds with a chain that cannot be broken.

5. Q.—What modes of taking opium are on the increase?

A.—Opium smoking and the hypodermic injection of morphine, injecting it under the skin.

6. Q.—Is the effect of opium on the system well understood?

A.—The different degrees of impaired health it brings on are very little understood, and there is need for physicians and others to study to improve the manner of treating opium patients, for the terrible suffering of these patients is shocking.

7. Q.—In what way does the use of opium seriously affect young people?

A.—It is often given to children in the form of paregoric, soothing syrups and similar preparations of opium to make them sleep, by foolish and ignorant mothers and lazy nurses, to keep children from crying if cross or in pain.

8. Q.—What is the result of this?

A.—The children live in a stupid, besotted state, the use of drugs injuring their brains, and dulling their senses, until they either grow up listless, useless men and women, or if they have any ailment, the opium has quieted their senses until they are unable to make the fact known and die suddenly.

9. Q.—In view of this, what should be an invariable rule with mothers?

A.—They should never allow their children to take a drop of soothing syrup, paregoric or opium, in any form, however diluted, except in cases of severe illness, and prescribed by a reliable physician.

10. Q.—How do people acquire the habit of taking opium?

A.—In almost every instance they begin