

ground would quickly sprout because the underlying stone would reflect the heat of the sun, and provide what gardeners call "bottom-heat," by which the germination is hastened. But such soil quickly dries out, and from its very shallowness is unproductive of perfect fruit. The roots of the growing plant cannot find sufficient moisture, hence soon become parched and the plant dries up and dies. People in this class are those who are easily touched because of their emotional excitability; but too often are unable "to stand," because they lack "root," though hold on God. 3rd, "Thorns," i.e., weeds and grain struggle for the mastery. Every Junior has seen such a field or garden and knows that unless the weeds, thistles, briars, etc., are not kept down they will "choke" the good plants and make the garden both dry and unprofitable. So in life; we hear God's Word, but other seeds grow in us and prevent it from bringing forth fruit. This class is very numerous. To keep down the weeds calls for constant watchfulness and untiring work. 4th, "Good," i.e., well-prepared and carefully tilled ground. Such hearers receive the Word intelligently, care for it during its growth diligently, and bring forth perfect (well-developed) harvest . . . Having explained the parable in some such way, let the leader ask such questions as these: What is in the seed? (Life.) What will the seed do when it is sown? (Grow.) Which will generally grow the faster, good seed or weeds? (Weeds.) What is needed that the earth may bring forth her best for us? (Our co-operation.) Will the ground grow something if left alone? (Yes; but weeds.) Does God wish our lives to be weedy or clean? etc.

NOTE.

By preparation in advance, such a lesson as this may be made one of the most profitable object-lessons possible, and greatly helpful to the Juniors in receiving and cultivating the Word of God.

DECEMBER 10th.—"How are we to confess Christ?" Matt. 10: 32, 33.

"Confess" and "deny" are opposites. "Confess" here means "own," "acknowledge," "avow." Confessing Christ, therefore, means to admit His character and claims, and openly avow our obedience to His precepts as well as faith in His atonement. "How are we to confess Christ?" By turning away from sin. (See 1 Kings 8: 33, 35, etc.) This is the first step. By spoken word of faith and avowal. (Rom. 10: 9.) This is public acknowledgment of our acceptance of Christ. By a close following of Christ in outward life and conduct. (Matt. 10: 38, etc.) Thus we confess Him as Saviour, as Teacher, as Master and Lord, and the world recognizes us as His disciples. This is not all. He will also recognize us. There is a day coming when all will "confess" to Him; but that confession is altogether different from the one He requires of us now. "Every tongue shall confess that He is Christ." The confession of earth anticipates and provides for that of the Judgment day. Then, only those who have owned and followed Him on earth will be owned and crowned by Christ in Heaven forever.

Questions.—Why should we own Christ now? What benefits will follow our present acknowledgment of Him? What makes it hard for us to publicly confess Jesus? When and where should we openly avow Him as our Lord and Master? When and where will He own us if we are true to Him? How may we make it easy to own Him before our friends and playmates? What Old Testament characters proved it possible to own Him under trial? Whose case do you recall to prove that if we confess Him on earth, He will strengthen us in our trials and deliver us from our enemies?

DECEMBER 23rd.—"What birthday gifts shall we bring to Christ?" Matt. 2: 1-12. (A Christmas meeting.)

The Christmas story is perhaps better known than any other of the Bible. The visit of the Magi is a familiar historical scene in the infant days of the Babe of Bethlehem. The presentation of the "gifts" to Jesus is the basis of this week's topic. The idea of the old Saxon Babe is perhaps as nearly correct as any other. He says "gold" implies the recognition of the Sovereignty of Jesus, "frankincense" the homage due Him as an adorable Divine Being, "myrrh" typified the bitterness of the trials He should bear in His human life and experience on earth. It will therefore be a wise plan to follow up the study of the topic after this plan. What "gifts" can we bring to Him that will extol Him as King, prove our worship of Him as the God-Man, and evince our desire to ease some of the sorrows and lessen some of the cares of the "Man of Sorrows" and acquainted with grief" as reflected in the lives of His children on earth? Our "gifts" will in this way be worthy, not because of their intrinsic value; but because of the spirit and motive that prompted us to make them. Christmas gifts, birthday presents, are sometimes offered in the hope of getting something back again in return. Is this the best spirit? Should we give to Christ in order to get something back again? Is this not a selfish motive? The spirit that is worthy and that makes the gift worthy is affection. With love in our hearts for our friends, we find it a glad some and easy thing to give to them, and the best we have is none so good to prove how much we love them. So with Jesus. He loved, and because He loved, He gave Himself. If we love we too will give, and give ourselves. Because He is King we should give Him our loyalty; because He is Adorable Redeemer we should give Him our worship; because He "bore our sorrows" we should bear the sorrows of His children, and thus showing our love and likeness to Him, make a glad and happy Christmas season in our hearts, homes, schools and neighborhood. The following simple board talk may be used to illustrate the Christmas story:

- JOYFULLY.
- EARNESTLY.
- SEEK.
- UNITEDLY.
- SERVE.

Like the shepherds, the wise men, and all true worshippers, we should seek Jesus joyfully and earnestly, and then working together we should serve Him unitedly.

DECEMBER 30th.—"What new things do you want to put into the New Year?" Luke 5: 30-39. (A New Year's meeting.)

Not only is this the last topic-study in the old year, but it is the last of the 19th century. Before another meeting is convened we shall have passed the dividing line of the centuries. What new things should we carry over with us? A new heart? That certainly ought to go. A new life? That will follow the new heart. A new purpose? Concerning the study of the Bible, as to our habits of prayer, worship, conversation, obliging service to our fellowmen? Yes! These and many more will occur to all. Remember that, as personally responsible to Christ, no other person can do our part for us. Our individual work can be done only by ourselves.

But as a League we can carry new things into the new century. Cannot you decide on some forward movement in your plan? Try something you have not tried before. Get out of ruts. Seek to make and keep a personal freshness in your weekly meetings. To do this you must determine to stay for your meetings and spend time and effort,

and if necessary a little money too, to do the best work for the Juniors. Above all, whether in your individual or collective life, decide to put new energy, but by resolute application you may overcome difficulties that have seemed almost insurmountable in the past. *Resolve and do.*

"We are standing on the threshold, we are in the opened door. We are treading on a borderland we have never trod before. Another century is opening, another century is gone. We have passed the darkness of the night; we are in the early morn. We have left the fields behind us, o'er which we scattered seed; We pass into the future which none of us can read. The corn among the weeds, the stones, the surface mold, May yield a partial harvest, we hope for sixty-fold. Then hasten to fresh labor, to thresh, and reap, and sow, Bid the new century welcome, let the old century go. Then gather all your vigor, press forward in the light, And let your motto ever be: "For God and for the Right."

One of the Common Folk.

He is just a common sparrow,
Brown of wing and bright of eye;
Most o' folk's are swearin at him,
He don't care—no more do I.
He may nip the leaves, the youngent,
An' the greenest on the tree,
Even you an' bring his cronies
In to help for all o' me.

I've a likin' for the fellow—
He's a plucky one you know;
Time an' again I've heard him
Chirpin' through the winter snow.
Only while the storm is fiercest
Does he hide inside the door;
At the faintest hint o' clearin'
Out he comes and chirps once more.

There are many kinds of tempests
That we all have got to face—
Don't be sneerin' at a creature
When you've not his pluck and grace.
Though he's just a common sparrow,
Brown of wing and bright of eye;
'Spouse you take a turn a chirpin'
While the storm's a sweepin' by.

A GENTLEMAN has a bright little boy who behaves for all the world like other children, which in a child is a virtue, not a vice. The other afternoon he played so hard that he fell asleep, and was put to bed without his supper.

The next morning Harry got up very much refreshed by his long rest, and came down to his breakfast as smiling and happy as could be.

"You were a very good boy, last night, Harry," said a lady. "You went to bed without your supper."

Harry looked at her for a moment in painful surprise, and then all of a sudden his face clouded, and he asked his nurse:

"Did I go to sleep without my supper last night?"

"Yes," said the nurse.
"Well," said he, between his tears, "I want my last night's supper now."

And he had it.—*Tit-Bits.*

AN Oregon girl sent 15 cents to a Chicago firm which advertised that that money to send recipe for softening and whitening the hands. This was the reply: "Soak them well in dilute lye three times a day while your mother rests." The advice was worth the money.