

For Christmas

In addition to the delightfully original 16-page Service of Music, Recitations, etc., for Christmas, advertised in our Christmas Supplement, No. 7, which is likely now in the hands of all superintendents, we are supplying, on behalf of the General Assembly's Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies, A Christmas Missionary Service for the Sunday Schools, entitled, Christmas for the World. The Service contains responsive Bible readings, Christmas music, and a Supplement giving directions for exercises, costumes, etc., for children from Korea, India, China, etc., who take part in the exercises. Our Presbyterian Sabbath Schools will thus be well furnished, either way, for a happy Christmas time.

"A Gentleman and a Soldier"

A private in the British army now fighting against the Germans, wrote to the father of an officer who had been killed in action: "He was a gentleman and a soldier. The last day he was alive we had a cup of tea in the trenches, and we asked him if he would have a drink. He said: 'No, drink it yourselves; you are in want of it.' And then, with a smile, he added: 'We have to hold the trenches to-day.'" And the letter ends: "He died doing his duty and like the officer and gentleman he was."

At the front "an officer and a gentleman" appears in his true quality. The words as used there do not point to a mere class distinction. It is not custom or speech or dress or money that wins these titles from the hearts of the men in the trenches. They are accorded to the leader whom the soldiers have learned to trust because he puts upon himself harder things than he puts upon them, forgetting his superiority and thinking only of his obligations. It is such an one who can lead his followers with a smile.

It is a great thing if the scholars in our Sunday Schools can see in their teachers the spirit which the private discerned in his officer,—the spirit which, in great things and little things, seeks to make things easier for others even at the cost of being made harder for oneself. For that surely is the spirit of

Jesus Christ, and the teacher in whom it is manifest cannot fail to lead the scholars to Him.

The Everyday Christ

John S. Sargent, the great painter, has been for years at work upon a wonderful series of paintings for the Boston Public Library. They are to picture the growth of the Christian religion. On one side of the room is the famous frieze of the Hebrew prophets, known to all Christians in countless reproductions if they have not seen the splendid original. In the ceiling and on the wall above this frieze the heathen religions are marvelously presented,—a tangle of color from which, as we gaze, this and that deity emerges, but indistinctly, and grotesquely,—a strange and true contrast to the simplicity and dignity of the Hebrew prophets below.

At the other end of the room we see the crucifixion of Christ. The frieze corresponding to that of the prophets is composed of exquisite angels, each bearing an instrument of the passion,—the nails, the crown of thorns, the spear, the sponge, and so on. Above the whole is a vast shadowy image of the triune God, suffering in Christ for the sins of the world. It is inadequate, but only as all human presentations of the infinite are inadequate. With force and clearness, if not with winsomeness, it presents the climax scene of the world's history.

But the wall between the two, a space equal to both the walls combined, remains vacant. The artist seems to have reserved that space for the greatest and most difficult picture of all, for which, now for many years, he seems to be awaiting a special inspiration. It is to be a painting of Christ preaching His Sermon on the Mount.

A smaller artist would have painted this earlier in the series, perhaps the very first, and would have thought that the real difficulty lay in depicting the vague splendors and mystic entwinings of the heathen idolatries, or the awful tragedy of Calvary. But Sargent knows that the splendor of his art is required to set forth the meeting of divinity with our common humanity at its point of average experience. We can better understand the forward-pointing visions in Isaiah,