



LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 30, 1906.

Review.

Golden Text.

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.—Is. ix., 6.

Home Readings.

Monday, Dec. 24.—Mark xii., 28-34, 38-44.
 Tuesday, Dec. 25.—Matt. xxv., 14-30.
 Wednesday, Dec. 26.—Matt. xxvi., 17-30.
 Thursday, Dec. 27.—Luke xxiii., 13-25.
 Friday, Dec. 28.—Luke xxiii., 33-46.
 Saturday, Dec. 29.—Matt. xxviii., 1-15.
 Sunday, Dec. 30.—Luke xxiv., 36-53.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

A man called on me once to cultivate my interest in an invention he had made. Not being much acquainted with mechanics, the invention being a somewhat complicated machine, and the description being technical, comparatively little progress was made. In the next visit the inventor brought a plan with specifications, elevations, etc. A better, but not entirely satisfactory understanding was reached. On the third call a working model was set down upon my desk. It was a beautiful bit of mechanism of burnished steel and brass, set in motion by a storage-battery and decorated with tiny electric lights. It was a demonstration. Nothing further was needed.

That is the story of the progress of revelation. God spoke through His prophets and holy men of old. The full meaning of their message was not understood by all. By and by the distinct advance not difficult to account for was made, but even yet revelation was still incomplete. Then in the fulness of time came into the world a Man full of God, living the ideally perfect life of love and service. He is the express image of the life that is pleasing to God. He is in His own person the completion of revelation. He is God's working model. The unskilled, untechnical, wayfaring man need no longer err. He has only to look and know. Yet this Divine working model is not easily exhausted. There is depth and riches of wisdom and grace in Him. See the progress of revelation. First isolated, oral messages from God. Next the reduction of the oral to written form, and finally the manifestation of God in man. Oral Word, Written Word, Living Word.

This is what makes the study of the Life of Jesus transcendent and of inexhaustible importance. It is pleasing to study of the physical and social environment of Jesus—the political, economic conditions of His day; the governmental and ecclesiastical problems; the drift of philosophic and theological thought. But in and of themselves these are only curious matters except as they serve to interpret Jesus—to show us what He is and what He stands for. They are mirrors to reflect Him. That is their highest use. One may easily wear himself out on the way to Jesus. He may get lost in the endless and fruitless minutiae of synagogue and sanhedrin, and not get near enough to the Son of man to feel the beat of His infinite heart.

For the entire year now closing the portrait of Jesus has been held before the twenty million people who are following the International System of Lessons. The gains will have been incalculable if his mind has been discerned and his attitude to life assumed as a result of these studies.

Too much time must not be spent upon the incidents of His birth and infancy. They are relatively unimportant. To dote upon the star and the angels of the Nativity is to go back to the child age of the race which de-

lights in a marvel. The wonder is not that Jesus was born, but what He became and said and did in His manhood. The isolated instance of His boyhood, standing between infancy and maturity, shows us that the ideal youth was already discerning and adjusting himself to the Divine will. Then follows in course His inauguration by public baptism, His testing by private temptation, and his choice of official associates.

Two familiar terms suffice to epitomize the public life of Jesus. They are Words and Works.

In the quaint Racovian catechism the question is asked, 'Whence had this Man this wisdom?' The answer affirms that Jesus made frequent ascensions to heaven, and received directly from Deity the truths which He afterwards communicated to men. The conception is too artificial to be satisfactory, and besides Jesus spoke with a self-derived authority. His formula was, 'Verily I say unto you.' Then, too, it was not necessary to go into heaven or deep to bring the Divine—God was with Him and in Him. Out of this consciousness of oneness with God he preached as with a Divine commission. His message has an authority that never inhered in ecclesiastical establishment or succession. He is the true Teacher of the universal heart. His congregations dissolved, but in each generation they have been reassembling and have been receiving as if directly from Jesus' lips those words which are spirit and life. There is mystery about it—only the mystery of goodness, love, and service.

The works of Jesus have also engaged our attention for the year just closing. His works are His words in action. He did what He said. He is the Divine example of unselfish service. His ruling principle was, 'Not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give and keep giving.' Well might His disciples fear that His zeal would consume, while He neglected food and rest to counsel, heal, and console. Again, He was not doing these kindly offices alone for the immediate objects of His compassion. As He has gathered successive congregations of hearers of His words, so He gathers successive groups of sufferers to be helped and healed. He lives again and forever in His ideals of love and service. Human salvation will ultimately come from the same application of these Divine principles to human life universally.

Nature drew a curtain of darkness around the closing scene of Jesus' life. It is suggestive of the reserve which is becoming the treatment of the last events. To analyze and diagnose, to depict minutely the grim and ghastly associations and incidents is to go back to the Middle Ages, when a horrid puppet show of it was made upon the streets to awe a foolish folk. This morbid and terrifying picturing of Calvary is an outgrowth of a theology now effete, which affirmed that Jesus paid on the cross an exact penalty for the total redemption. This led to a superlative emphasis upon the woe of Golgotha Greater Divine suffering meant greater human sin.

A view now growing in acceptance is that Jesus suffered no more moral anguish upon the cross than He did at times during His life, notably, for example, in Gethsemane. This suffering arose from His identification of Himself with the whole human race, bearing in sympathy upon His holy heart its grief and sins, and burning with the holy purpose to redeem His fellows.

Again, we are reminded that the death of Jesus on the cross is not the goal of the sacred narrative. The last chapter is the true climax. It relates the resurrection, the forty days, and the ascension. It is demonstration of the continuity of life, the survival of spirit, the recognition of friends, and whatever else is contained in that bliss word, heaven.

C.E. Topic.

Sunday, Dec. 30.—Topic—Carey and missions in India. Isa. liv., 2, 3 (the text of Carey's famous sermon.)

Junior C. E. Topic.

MEMORY MEETING.

Monday, Dec. 24.—Remember Samuel's words. I. Sam. vii., 3.

Tuesday, Dec. 25.—Remember God's gift. John iii., 16.

Wednesday, Dec. 26.—Remember Saul's mistake. I. Sam. xv., 24, 25.

Thursday, Dec. 27.—Remember Solomon's choice. I. Kings iii., 9.

Friday, Dec. 28.—Remember your Bible. II. Kings xxiii., 2, 3.

Saturday, Dec. 29.—Remember now thy Creator. Eccl. xii., 1.

Sunday, Dec. 30.—Topic—How have this year's meetings helped you? I. Sam. vii., 12.

The Cradle Roll.

(For Sunday School Christmas Entertainment.)

Dear infants, precious little things,
 Your keeper is the King of Kings;
 While Christmas music sweetly rings,
 We join to welcome you.

Into this circle of your friends,
 Where gladness with contentment blends,
 And to that joy which never ends,
 We gladly welcome you.

And while that Gracious One is near,
 Who loves each infant voice to hear,
 This Sunday School in love sincere
 Delights to welcome you.

And may that One, who loves you each,
 So place His gifts within your reach,
 That you may learn what those would teach,
 Who this day welcome you.

To Him who is the children's Friend,
 Our wishes and our prayers ascend,
 That you this school may long attend
 With those who welcome you.

May love divine so pure and sweet
 Make you in length of days complete,
 And then in glory may you meet,
 All those who welcome you.

T. WATSON.

Dalesville, Que., 1904.

The Most Effective Teaching.

The Christian teacher must understand that he teaches more by his life than by his thoughts, his words or his deeds. The question of the true teacher in God's school is not 'What do I know?' nor yet 'What can I do?' but always and emphatically, 'What am I?' To know is good. To do is better. To be is best. Be ye, therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' is the standard set for all teachers by the ideal teacher.—Hamill.

A Spirit of Reverence.

I plead to-night for a united effort to secure for our Sunday schools an atmosphere pervaded with the spirit of reverence. I plead for a common-sense use, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, of the fundamental principles connecting physical posture and mental attitude, and in order that these common-sense means may have a fair opportunity to effect their purpose, I plead with our adult leaders to co-operate by their example in developing this quality of reverence in our Sunday schools.—Prof. Reyford.

Do You Take a Weekly Paper?

Your local weekly, of course, but you need something besides that, and the Montreal 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead' exactly fits your needs. 'An independent, fearless and forceful newspaper.' Latest news of the World, Market and Stock Reports, Financial Review, Literary Review, Good Stories, Home Department, Boys' Page, Questions and Answers, valuable departments devoted to farm, garden and allied interests. Something for every member of the family. Advertisements under editorial supervision. A clean, commercial, agricultural and home newspaper. One dollar a year. May be clubbed with the 'Messenger,' the two to one address for only \$1.20 instead of \$1.40. The 'Canadian Pictorial' may be added to such a club for only 50 cents, making only \$1.70 for the three papers, well worth the regular price of \$2.40.