

Texas Christian Advocate.

About the Lesson.

LESSON XII, SUNDAY, DEC. 23. RUTH'S CHOICE. Ruth 1:16-22.

LESSON SURROUNDINGS.

The position of the Book of Ruth in our Bible differs from that given in the Hebrew Bible. But our versions agree with the Septuagint in placing it next to the Book of Judges. The events occurred during the time of the "judges" (Ruth 1:1), probably at least a century before Saul became king; but no definite date can be assigned to them. The story seems to belong to some interval of repose in the history of Israel. Baz is spoken of as the great-grandfather of David, and this would point to a time before the oppression under the Philistines. The closing chapters of the Book of Judges (17-21) relate incidents that belong to an early part of Israel's history under the "judges."

This book opens with the simple narrative of Elimelech's sojourn in the land of Moab in consequence of a famine, of his death, then of the death of his two sons, then of the return of Naomi to the land of Israel with her two daughters-in-law. On the way, at some unknown place, probably on the east side of the Jordan, on the borders of the land of Moab, the touching scene depicted in verses 6-18 occurred. One daughter-in-law turned back at Naomi's suggestion. The lesson tells what the other one said and did.—Sunday School Times.

TEACHING POINTS.

A sweet-tempered Israelitish woman named "Piecing," in a land of expatriation, was such a missionary that she won the finest example of devoted friendship on record. The convert was ready to leave country, kindred, take any new conditions of life, death and burial. Heart affection triumphs over all external. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." Love does not count the cost of surrender, nor the circumstances of those to whom it makes its tender alliances. Naomi may have gone out strong and rich in husband and sons, and come back widowed, bereft, and poor, but Ruth loves her, not her.

If love calls for great surrenders, it has also great rewards. Elisha will not go back, even at command; he gets a double portion of the Spirit. Ruth cleaves to Naomi, whose lot was so hard that she wanted to be named "Bitter," and she gets growth, love and peace, and becomes the great-grandmother of the sweet singer of Israel besides. She was permitted to put her gentle blood in the veins of Christ.

The elements of a true choice are: determination, no turning back at urging of friends, or scoff of foes; complete; it takes any people, Naomi's or God's, to be its own, any destiny, life or death. It is an affectionate total self-surrender. It may be made toward God as well as toward our fellows.

Dante has the approval of all brave men in assigning to that hell where are those disinclined alike of mercy and justice Pope Celestine V.

"Who made, through cowardice, the great refusal." It has the approval of all brave men, that every one should be assigned to heaven who has read these grandest words of God, and made the royal choice of serving perfectly the one only object of a perfect love.—Bishop H. W. Warren, in Sunday-School Times.

ILLUSTRATIVE APPLICATIONS.

Whether thou goes, I will go...thy people shall be my people, and thy God God...the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me (vs. 16, 17). To join the Lord's people includes the idea of being one of the Lord's people. And to be one of the Lord's people is to accept the lot of the Lord's people for always and in all things. Ruth, rather than Ophah or Sapphira, should be our pattern in sharing with the people of God. It is not enough to go to the borders of our land, and then kiss the Z. onward traveler good-by. Nor is it sufficient to put part of our possessions into the common stock, and hold back the rest. Unless we are wholly the Lord's, there is not enough of us in the Lord's service to be of any particular account. A Moabitess can join Israel, but not without quitting Moab, and accepting the lot of the Israelite. A Christian can prove that he is a Christian only by evidencing his love for all who are Christians, and by sharing all that he is and that he has with them in their needs.

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking unto her (v. 18). To say what you mean to do is one thing. To mean what you say is quite another thing. And unless you talk about your consecration and devotedness to God, your words have no power with God, and very little power, if any, with man. When a rich church member says that he is the Lord's steward, and that he holds all his property as consecrated property, that sounds very well. But the way in which he treats the contribution box and the subscription lists of his church goes a great way toward convincing people how steadfastly minded he is the line of his professions. A steadfast mind is always a power in the world, nowhere more of a power than in the church of Christ. When a lad says "No" as if he meant it, in answer to some temptation to do wrong, his tempt-

ers are more likely to leave speaking unto him in that line. And it is the same with older persons as with young ones.

When they were come to Bethlehem...all the city was moved about them (v. 9). A new comer into the fold of the Good Shepherd never fails of a welcome from the rest of the real flock. We have the best of reasons for believing that even in heaven there are rejoicings over one repentant sinner, one willing-hearted refugee from Moab, and that for the time being that one convert centres more of heavenly interest than any nine y and nine of those who were safe before. And so it is in the church assembly below. Every loving follower of Jesus has his heart gladdened by the sight of one new convert standing, or kneeling, before God in the presence of the congregation, to confess faith in the only Savior, and to promise unfailing allegiance to him. Have you had that welcome yourself? If not, why not? If you have had it, see to it that you don't fall in extending it to others.

The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me... The Almighty hath alloted me (vs 20, 21). "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." "In the world ye have tribulation." Whoever comes into the circle of the Lord's loved ones, must expect to have things look dark to him at times. The Lord's ways are not as our ways. What the Lord does we know not now; but we shall know hereafter. Just as surely as we cast in our lot with the people of God, and receive a greeting from them, just as surely must we undergo an oppressing and saddening surroundings and experiences; and just so surely shall we be tempted to question and distrust the loving care and tenderness of our God, when we have no reason to do so. Yet any one of us may find, as Naomi found, that it was by means of the bitter all cisions which at the time seemed so grievous, that the Lord was bringing the still great one into the sweep of his best blessings for that one and for those dear-est to that one.

And they come to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest. (v. 22) "To them that love God all things work together for good." Trials and joys have alike their part in the plan of God in behalf of those who are dear to him. A d his providences are so arranged that they could not be bettered for the truest welfare of those who trust him. There does not seem to have been any planning on Naomi's and Ruth's part to reach Bethlehem "in the beginning of barley harvest," any more than they had any understanding of the bright side of the bereavements which had brought them there just then. But everything for their future seems to have hinged on the fact of their reaching there—empty-handed and sad-hearted—at just that time of year. If Elimelech or Caillon had left "a handsome property" to Naomi or Ruth, the widows would probably have continued to live in Moab; or if they had moved over to Bethlehem they would have set up a separate establishment, and future generations would not have been likely to know anything about them. But it was because those destitute and disconsolate women came into Beth-lehem weeping, and had no property to "support" them, only the Lord's arm to lean on, that Ruth started out into the barley-field to glean a scanty living for herself and mother-in-law. And because all this "happened"—in the Lord's plan—in just this way, Ruth the widowed Moabitess came to be the ancestress of David and of David's greater Son, stepped into history and immortal fame; and on this account you and I and millions of others hold her in loving reverence, and are making her life and character a lesson for our good and the good of others to day. Doesn't the Lord know what is best for his dear ones? Ought we to have any further doubt on this point?—H. Clay Trumbull in Sunday School Times

Old and Young.

"THROUGH THE NEEDLE'S EYE." A CHRISTMAS STORY.

A. H. HOME, in Silver Cross. "Hiram Hopkins" was the name his father had whispered to the minister when he offered him for baptism, almost sixty years ago.

Sixty years had made a great change in Milltown. It had filled up a good many of the spaces between the old graves in the churchyard. It had made the moss cling like a gray beard to the belfry roof. It had made of the little straggling main street quite a smart thoroughfare, in which the new town hall and brick stores and the soldiers' monument held themselves loftily above the low wooden shops, sandwiched between their greatness like thin, hard bits of meat between great spongy, swelling slices of bread. Somehow the real flavor of village life was in the little old shops, after all. In one of them Hiram Hopkins sat on his tailor's bench, with his legs crossed in true Turkish fashion, and his mouth puckered in a silent whistle, as he tried, in the fast fading December light, to make a refractory needle accept a kinky thread.

Sixty years had made changes in Hiram as well as in Milltown, where he had passed them, every one. They had changed the writhing baby, who squirmed and wriggled as the water touched his forehead, into a swarthy, unshaven man, whose shaggy eye-brows hid the kindly twinkle of his sunken eyes. They had bent his back and crooked his legs until the short one, in order to keep pace with the long one, was forced to assume a

spasmodic hop, which had changed his name on the common lip from Hiram Hopkins to "Hopping High." Old Hiram did not like the change much, but he got used to it as he had been forced to get used to a great many other unpleasant things. He had had a good deal of snubbing all the way along. His mother had gone out of the world when he came into it, and his stepmother never thoroughly forgave him for having stayed behind. His schoolmates, with youthful pitilessness, snubbed him for his weak back and crooked legs. His fellow apprentices could not forgive his lack of vices, and even his beer-loving old master found it hard to pardon the industry and sobriety that promised to take the patronage he was wasting at his cups.

So, though he came, as the years passed on, by dint of patient plodding, to be the owner of the diggy shop and the rooms above it, he had been snubbed so long and so much on the way, that it never occurred to him that he need not live and work alone. He took it as a matter of course, and made the best of it, and worked away steadily, his business growing with the growing town, but with his heart as empty and lonely as ever a heart could be. For, strange as it may seem, the heart of old Hiram Hopkins was not bowed like his shoulders, nor twisted and crooked like his legs; but so silent was that no one could have guessed how up-right and sound it was, and, least of all, did he suspect it himself.

And this afternoon, as he sat there puckering his mouth and straining his old eyes, aiming at that evasive hole in the needle, suddenly went through his head the thought of the text about the camel and the needle's eye. Hiram was not very strong on interpretations; the Word, just as he found it, was good enough for him, and the lesson was all the same to him, whether the needle's eye meant that or something else. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the Kingdom." How hardly. Too big a load to squeeze through the gate, and rather not get in than to let any of the burden go. Somehow the thought clung to him, till he dropped the work and went up-stairs to his lonely room to freshen the fire and set the old brown earthen teapot on the hearth; and still the thought kept coming and going in his brain.

Suddenly, as he poured his tea, he heard the church bell ring. It was Wednesday night, and the usual weekly meeting was about to begin. Slowly he rose, and taking his staff and hat, went out into the cool, clear air, and turned his halting steps toward the church. From the vestry he saw a stream of light pour out across the snow, and caught the grotesque figure his shadow made as he entered the open door.

He did not come often, though he had been a member of the church all his life. Once he liked to come; but as the years crept on he became more untidy and uncouth, and there was no one at home to smooth the gray locks or to put a pin in the straying collar. He became conscious of himself, and when the boys shouted after him in the street, he felt more and more like keeping forever within the shadow of his shop.

But to-night some new spirit seemed to animate him, and several times he half rose to his feet. His neighbors saw him and stared coldly; his pastor saw him, and there was nothing encouraging in his look, or in the voice with which he said: "The brethren will be very brief, as the hour is already late."

Poor old Hiram; he understood it. He was too halting, and blundering, and old, and twisted and shabby. Of course, if he would speak they must listen; but what a foolish man to suppose that he had anything to say, or that they would want to hear!

Slowly he went home through the darkness. A few careless boys sent snow-balls after his bowed figure. He had been snubbed again. No matter if he had hoarded and hidden money years and years, and now wanted to lighten his burden and share his riches with the needy, and so truly enter the kingdom of heaven; nobody wanted or cared for him. No matter if the Christmas was near; nobody looked to him for Christmas comfort and cheer. Bitter and sore, he halted in the shadow of the entrance to his shop. Behind him came the strong tread of two men, arm in arm—Parson Reed and Deacon Foote—talking low and earnestly, and pausing just before his door.

The fact is, if they belonged to our church, why, the parish would feel bound to support them; but they don't, and one's helped them, and another's helped them, till it's no use. They will have to go to the poor house, and might as well go first as last.

"Yes, I suppose it must come to that, for Mrs. Hill has not health to work hard enough to support them, and the children are too young to do much. But what is to become of the place?"

"Oh, the place," answered the deacon, "belongs to the town already. When Mr. Hill died his wife did her best to support them there; then when she became ill the town had to furnish coal and provisions, until, the fact is, the place has been eaten up."

closed, but by the window watched Hiram, in his Sunday suit. His gray hair was brushed, and the razor had had a chance at the stiff beard, and even the shaggy eyebrows seemed to have lifted to let the sun shine through. The old colored woman who came once a week and tidied up his place was in a state of great bewilderment as to what this unwonted orderliness of things could mean. But on her cogitations broke the sound of sleigh bells; and Hiram rushed to the door in time to call Mr. Hosea Jankins, the Overseer of the Poor, in whose big sleigh was a woman wrapped in a buffalo robe, and children who suddenly seemed to Hiram too many to count.

"Hold on, Hossy," he shouted; "where you goin'?" and the long leg strode to the sleigh, and the short one came hopping after.

"Goin' up t' poor farm; nice com'table place; ought to be thankful 'nuff got so good a place to go to; nice Christmas dinner all smokin' hot," said Hosea, scanning Mrs. Hill's face, uneasily.

"Now, you don't mean it, Hossy? Horace Hill's wife and children goin' to the poor house, and Christmas mornin', too, when everybody's got more'n they know what to do with? Now, you jest head that hoss straight round, and back up to my door, I'm going to have a Christmas party. I'm just a leetle late in givin' out my invitations, that's all. I meant to give 'em out in meetin', and ask all the folks that didn't calkerlate to give a Christmas party this year—like the boys, you know, them little fellars that works and ain't got a reglar home, exactly—to come round and cheer up a lonesome old fellar like me. But I got a kinder scared; had on my ev'ry-day clothes, and thought nobody'd want to come; shouldn't blame them none, neither. But now I've got my dinner, and I've just gone 'ordin' to Scrip-tur, out into the high ways to find some one to bring in."

And, meantime, one astonished child after another was lifted on to the doorstep, and the feeble mother was led away with fat M'Issa's black arm about her.

"Well, this jest beats me," said Hosea, looking back at his empty sleigh.

"Now, Hossy, if you've a mind to take that sleigh and pick up another load of the old folks, or the boys, or anybody that ain't goin' to celebrate special, you can drop jest as many as you please before this door. Now, Mrs. Hill," said the little man, following her up-stairs into the room, where M'Issa was making her comfortable, "you see, I had a notion to invite some of the children, and maybe some of the neighbors, to dinner to day, and I couldn't take care of so many without some one to help. So I hope you'll excuse me if I seemed any-ways rude to ketch you jest as ye was flyin'; and now, I've got ye."

But the tears were starting from the widow's eyes, and Hiram was not used to tears, and before she could answer him he hobbled out of the room.

And these were not the only guests to dinner. That sleigh came back twice with old men and antiquated maidens, and with newboys and bootblacks hanging on behind. And out in the back shop a little twisted man hopped in and out, in a tangle of bare-legged small boys, who, seeing a large case of ready-made suits opened before them, could not wait to be fitted in turn.

"Let ersults," muttered Hiram, recuing a clothes pin of a child, who had got himself lost in a pair of trousers that he had buttoned over his head; "let er suits t' I bought when Jessup sold out. Been wonderin' what I was such a fool's t' buy 'em for, and now I know. It's 'tigh time, high time I began to unload if I'm ever goin' to git into the kingdom. There! hat fits ye, my little man. Here, M'Issa. I can't get ten arms into one jacket, so while I'm fittin one and another, you jest give these little ones a scrub."

And so, with laughter and squeals, and splashing of water, and dancing about with soap in their eyes, and remonstrances of, "Now, honey, you jes' have yer-self, and walk worthy yer privileges," the fun went on.

At the head of the table sat Mrs. Hill, and when the merry meal was over, and "Hopping High" asked the boys if next year they would like to come again, they gave a shout that made the old house ring.

"Well, then, I invite you all for the next year, provided Mrs. Hill and her children will stay here and get the house and dinner ready for you. Our good M'Issa did it almos' alone this year, and it has been such a piece of work as I should not like to put on her again."

"Dat's so, honey," said M'Issa, pausing in her exit with a plate of chicken bones in each hand; "I've worked for Mr. Hopkins many a year, but I didn't never know afore that he'd got such a family! And suddenly remembering that she was making an after dinner speech, she ducked her head, while a daring newboy shouted:

"Three cheers for Mr. Hopkins and a tiger for High."

CHIEFLY SISTERS.

Golden Rule. There is still another relative of yours, young ladies, whom I would ask you to consider.

You regard him sometimes as a plague and a nuisance, I know; but though I admit that he often is most exasperating, there is a better light in which to consider him. "That little brother of mine is such a bother;" "that big brother is such a tease;" "I often hear some sister say. In an obituary notice that I once

read, a young man was spoken of, through a bad misprint, as the eldest "bother" of such and such a distinguished individual. I wish that these mistakes and elisions of a letter might occur only at the printer's font and never in real life.

"Let sisters not begrudge the time and care bestowed on a brother," writes one whose pithy words I have before had occasion to quote. "It is hard to believe that any boy that you know so well as your own brother can ever turn out anything very useful. Well, he may not be a Moses. There is only one of that kind needed in six thousand years. But I tell you what, your brother will be either a blessing or a curse to society, and a candidate for happiness or wretchedness. Don't snub him. Don't depreciate his ability. Don't talk discouragingly about his future. Don't tease him. Brothers and sisters do not consider it any harm to tease. That spirit abroad in the family is one of the manes; and most devilish. There is a teasing that is pleasurable, and is only another form of innocent rally; but that which provokes and irritates and makes the eye flash with anger is to be rephended. It is the curse of innumerable households that the brothers tease the sisters, and the sisters the brothers. Sometimes it is the color of the hair, or the shape of the features, or an affair of the heart. Sometimes it is by revealing a secret, or by a suggestive look, or a quiff, or an 'Ah-em.' Tease! Tease! Tease! Christ says, 'He that hateth his brother is a murderer.' Now when you by teasing, make your brother or sister hate, you turn him or her into a murderer or murderess."

Did you ever think of this that probably that brother whom you apparently think so little of, is fully as worthy a boy as that other girl's brother whom you think is "just nice?" You do not think that he is, because you know him better, but probably there is some other girl who thinks at this moment that he is very near perfection, while she has a very moderate opinion of her own brother whom you admire. It would be well if you should exchange eyes with her for a little while. There is much in your own brother that you have not discovered. He is probably a bright, manly, courageous fellow, with all his faults, and I know you love him in your inmost heart, but I want to have you manifest that affection in more helpful ways. Do not always pair off with some other girl's brother; do not make your own feel that he is of no account, and that you cannot enjoy yourself at a party or concert or lecture if he is the only one who sits by your side, and goes home with you afterward.

Do you know why God has put you in the same family and given you a common father and mother? It did not come so by chance but that you might exert a sterile influence over him, pure and sweet and wholesome; an influence that will raise him out of many a bog in which his coarser, masculine nature may otherwise get bemired. Very much of his true success in life will depend upon his ideal of womanhood. If that ideal is exalted he can never become utterly debased. If that ideal is low or trivial, he cannot rise very high in the scale of manhood. His ideal of woman-kind will be very much what you show yourself to be. You will be his gauge and standard of other women. Most likely your heart will be first touched by divine truth, and will first accept a Savior's love. Be to him, then, such an example of maidenly Christliness that he cannot miss his way to the cross. It was to Lazarus's sister that our Lord first made the joyful announcement: "Thy brother shall rise again." Through you the Lord will speak to many a brother, telling him to arise from his sin and begin the new life, the true life of a true man. Let us always bear in mind how our blessed Lord dignified and exalted these earthly relationships. His mother bore the name that many of you bear; his dear friends were the sisters of the house of Bethany; he thought the ruler's daughter of enough consequence to exert his supreme, miraculous power, and of the three whom he raised up to life she was one, and he has said: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

I know of no sorer appeal to make to your womanly natures. Because of what he has done for you, because of the honor he has put upon you, because of the mighty influence he has given you to exert, as mothers, daughters, sisters, be true to your high calling, in all these relations of life.

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SUNDAY S. FESTIVALS.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

M. Johnson, in The Silver Cross. One time, upon the border of a dim, old German forest, There stood the hut-like dwelling of a woodman rough and poor; Full hard he toiled in giving to that home its frugal living, But love and kindness dwelt within the humble cottage door. One Christmas Eve, the woodman with his wife and two fair children, Sat round the cheery fireside while the wintry storm swept by; When o'er the tree-twigs snapping they heard a feeble rapping, And a voice from out the snowdrifts crying, "Shelter, or I die!" The children eager hast'ning soon threw the door wide open, And brought within from out the storm a little wandering child; And on their heartless shiv'ring he told with pale lips quiv'ring, Of hunger, fright and bitter cold, alone in night so wild. The cottage children heard him with hearts aflood with pity, "Stay, stay with us! We have not much, but we will share," they cried; They comforted and fed him, to their own couch they led him, Then slept themselves on bench of wood drawn near the chimney side.

All early Christmas morning, when the dawn was just breaking, They woke to hear such music as they ne'er had heard before; And rising in amazement they saw from out their casement, A shining throng with harps of gold sweet singing 'round their door. "Oh Holy Child, we greet thee! Our harps and voices ringing, Whilst thou art sleeping safe within, we watch are keeping here; Bless be the house that shields thee, that love and comfort yields thee, It is the happiest on the earth, and unto heaven most near!"

The children turned in wonder, and there behind them standing They found the stranger, clad in gold, with glory in his face; "I am the Christ child, roaming ever in the Christmas gloaming, To find the loving-hearted, and reward their kindly grace." Then left he their poor dwelling, but just outside his doorway A fir-tree plucked and planted, saying it should grow to be. To each good child a pleasure, bearing gold and silver treasure; And still gold fruit and silver nuts grow on the Christmas tree.

This is the Christmas legend they tell the German children, When Christmas Eve all gather 'round the hearthstone's cheery flame; And the children softly listen with their sweet young eyes aglitter; And when the poor and wandering come, they help them in His name.



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Correspondence.

REMINISCENCES.

I joined the East Texas Conference in fall of 1852 and was appointed to the Clarksville circuit as junior preacher under Samuel Robins, a transfer from the Indian Mission Conference, who did not reach the work until March following, which put me in charge of the work until he arrived. This work was then a very large one with twenty eight regular appointments stretching over the counties of Bowie, and Red River and a small portion of Lamar. A young man's quarters was one hundred dollars and was no more. There were on the circuit then of local preachers J. W. P. McKenzie, W. G. Duke and Thos. Selby, whose prayers and wise counsel did me very much good. I would say to fathers and mothers in Israel, take care of the young men. This was a year of abundant labor and reasonable success; many were converted and added to the church.

C. J. COCK.

SULPHUR SPRINGS.

THE WANTS OF THE TIMES.

I am persuaded in my own mind that the thing most needed is a revival of secret prayer upon the part of the ministry. Not long since I roomed for several days with a distinguished minister, and I never did see him engaged in secret prayer. And only a short time since I was present where several of our learned divines preached; and to my surprise, they went from the busy throng to the pulpit and proceeded at once without a moment's meditation. These things may seem to some as little things; but I must confess to me it is a very serious matter. It was not so thirty years ago, when I entered the ministry. I well remember that our old preachers prayed much in secret; and never thought of entering the sacred desk without earnest pleading with God for divine help. They were not all learned men, but they had power with God and man. We may understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and without prayer we are nothing. We may tickle the ear and please the fancy of the populace, but can never reach the heart of the people. We may lament our cold and lifeless state, and send for an evangelist to give life to the dry bones; but all will be in vain without the power behind the throne. Head work is good, but knee work should not be ignored. Let us follow the example of Him who said, "When thou prayest enter into thy closet," and then we shall set an example to our flock worthy of imitation.

J. W. VEST.

MARTINDALE, TEXAS.

WESTWARD.

On the morning of Nov. 12 h, in company with several members of the Northwest Texas Conference, we left our home for Weatherford, the seat of our conference session. Our company were cheerful and communicative. And it was a noteworthy fact that after a year of hard toil, meagre success and poor pay, each preacher was happy and hopeful. Reaching Weatherford at 10:20 a. m., we were greeted by Bro. S. Cockton and others, and our home was assigned us with Mr. and Mrs. Rainbolt. Our stay was made pleasant in every particular; no visitor was more royally entertained than was this writer. The conference session was pleasant and harmonious; every member courteous and brotherly. Bishop Hendrix charmed all who heard him in the pulpit and witnessed his management in the chair. He surely understands the responsible duties of chairman, and is fully up to the highest standard in speedily and satisfactorily conducting the business of an Annual Conference. He knows just when to call for reports that are expected to evoke discussion, and to introduce visitors and agents who have long speeches to make. The bishop fills my ideal as a true Episcopos—gentle, kind, patient, and far seeing. He moves to conclusions with satisfaction.

On the evening of the 19th the final question was reached, and the Bishop proceeded to read the appointments for another conference year. Great solemnity rested upon the large assembly as men were assigned to new fields, and among strangers for another year of toil and care. Some of course received fat places, others a streak of lean—and this is right. Strange it is, that some think the best is and must be theirs all the way through. I heard but little complaint, and that came from the usual sources.

A large number of brethren left on the east bound train at 5:30 p. m. We remained over till morning, and with brethren westward bound we left on the morning of the 20th for the far west. We were soon in the rugged rock ribbed belt that seems designed to hold Texas together to furnish rock for building and maybe mineral wealth awaiting enterprise and capital. For miles hills, gulches, rocks, timber, short and scrubby, with an occasional settlement was seen. The whistle of the ponderous engine gave information of towns and stations, and our company gradually grew small, until Abilene was reached, and with one consent we disembarked, and in double column moved up to the parsonage, having as guide the returned pastor, Rev. C. S. McCarver. We found a cheerful, happy home, presided over by a refined Christian lady. Our stay was made pleasant. I rejoiced to witness the hearty welcome given Bro. McC. on his arrival at the depot. A marked difference between his people and others we know.

In company with Rev. J. H. Wiseman, on the morning of the 21st, we took passage in a hack bound for Anson. An

elderly lady, the two preachers and driver made up the company. A strong norther meeting us and the heavy frost draping the vast prairies, we were soon closed in on all sides by walls of cloth, so that our eyes were not permitted to feast upon the expansive and grand spreading scenes around us. One by one we grew faint—sick. We suggested seasickness. The curtain was raised, the sickness ceased, and we were permitted to behold one of the best sections of the great State. Taylor, Jones and Haskell counties offer more inducements to home seekers than any portion of the State. Lands can be purchased at \$1.50 to \$5 that cannot be excelled in the State for beauty and fertility. I consider it the best grain country in the State. We reached Anson, the capital of Jones county, in due time. Spent the time very pleasantly with Brother and Sister Wiseman. Found the people sad, as they were called upon to give up their pastor, Bro. W. having served the charge four years. I left with the dawn of day, reaching Haskell at 1 p. m. Here I found a small town, beautifully situated. Fine flowing water near by, and a fine country stretching away in every direction. As the sun was sinking to rest I halted at the gate of our children. A happy greeting—pleasant days are spent. The country is viewed. I preach Sunday. It rains on Monday like it does in Arkansas (pours). I leave on Wednesday for home. Spent the night at Throckmorton with Bro. Massie and family. What hospitality and how highly I appreciated it. Though sick when urged to preach for them I did the best I could. I spent a night in Albany with Bro. W. D. Robinson, a Methodist preacher. Welcome was accorded by Brother and Sister R. and all the children. I was sick—pain in the head, joints, bones, muscles, up and down. O what pain I suffered. Dengue does not match it—neuralgia in its most aggravated form. I could not eat, neither could I sleep, but I was extremely irascible, and therefore departed feeling that I had made an impression. Down to Cisco to Fort Worth; train gone forty minutes; round by Dallas; got home Dec. 1 sick, and still I suffer after twelve days have passed, unable to go to-day. If I fail to meet my appointments, say "he is sick." E. L. ARMSTRONG.

"DENY ME THrice."

"Mamma, I came near being snake bitten this morning," said our fourteen-year-old Fred, rushing into the kitchen where we were so busy with our forenoon work, struggling, single-handed, with "pots, pans, dishes and glass." He was very much excited concerning his adventure. In answer to my look of intense inquiry said: "I had taken up a bundle of grain, and from under the bind crawled a snake. I saw I had a firm grip on its neck at once, so I just 'hung on' till papa came and killed him. He was a 'rouser,' I tell you, and a copper-head at that!" "How bravely you acted! What presence of mind you exhibited, my son! This prompt action on your part no doubt saved your life! You are a very hero, Fred! I trust in future you may always have at your command the courage you displayed this morning! Am so glad you acted well!" We looked at his bonny curls as they clung to his damp forehead, as he stood, hat in hand, quenching his thirst from the big kitchen dipper filled with cool, clear water, and thought how thankful we should be! No word was spoken. We were so busy—ah, so very busy! We managed, however, to call from the back window as he passed: "Mind, you tell your father to be in to an early dinner, as I go to town directly after! No, thanks, my boy, you need not; I will take the children with me," in answer to his offer of "minding" them in my absence. We reached the city—not by "rapid transit" by any means—to all appearances by no other help than our "expert" driving, the strength of the tugs, and the "rotability" of old "Simon." "Yes, ma'm," said the drug clerk—where our first errand called us—as he handed a pale, "shaky-looking" man a package of quinine, "we do sell a great deal of quinine just now—so many are having chills." Well, we are not! We have no symptoms of chills! I just tell you, it is nearly all the fault of the mothers' allowing their children to eat all kinds of "trash"—green fruit, gorge themselves with ripe, paddle in the creeks, run bare headed in the sun, dew and rain as they please and when they please! I look after my family; and besides, when I see signs of illness I at once administer that "ounce of precaution," which invariably does away with the necessity of the "pound of cure." I look closely after the habits and health of my family. As we remember the pale, shaky looking man we secretly rejoice that we are not, in some respects, "as other men are." We step out wondering if this package of cream of tartar and soda will not produce better biscuits for tea, than those on which we broke our fast in the morning, made of that "snazzy" baking powder we were coaxed into buying from a "traveling salesman." We return in the gloaming. Our motherly hearts and minds exercised by the thought, "has all gone right in our absence." We find nothing worse has happened than a lean, lank, lop-eared pup, which has taken refuge with us for a few days, has eaten the eggs from under our favorite Laughan pallet, a setting hen, which would set, could not be "broke," had been turned out of her coop and had returned faithfully to her "first love"—her old nest. "Well, never mind, we can get her again; we are self-sufficient for all such emergencies."

We are called from the contemplation of our own capabilities by the misfortune of our neighbor, whose little ten year old girl came screaming, "O, Mrs. C., ma has burned her hand so bad; she says come over as quick as ever you can. I am to stay, she says, with Allie and mind the baby until you come back." Making all speed possible, brings us to the assistance of our suffering friend. After doing all in our power with the remedies at hand, and finding no relief, we bethink ourselves of that "bottle of stuff" at home which wrought such wonders on our own scalded foot last year. "I will run for it and send Susie back with it in no time." Away we go; "well, I wonder if I can lay my hand on it; I do hope there will be enough to put on her poor hand." Once at home, a vigorous search is instituted, boxes and shelves are ransacked, medicine chest is gone through in all haste, kitchen and even pantry shelves are explored. Finally, as we come upon the dust covered sticky looking bottle, from the back shelf in the closet, Susie came up as with all the excitement due a railroad accident: "O, ma'm, your little Dot came near being smashed to pieces while you were gone." We are speechless, listen like one is supposed to do to the reading of their death warrant. "You know the big barrel of ashes on the sloping board to drip lye? Well, Allie and I thought it would make a good side for our play house, so we spread down the horse blanket near it and set the baby down. The long stick which was against the barrel was in our way, so when we pulled it out the barrel began to slide down towards baby; I just put my back against it, and pushed with all my might, calling to Allie to take Dot away. She could not move, she was scared so. I just put out my foot and gave Dot a shove, and sent her tumbling over. Down came the barrel—smash! It did not hurt her, ma'm; only a few ashes on her hair; that is all; but there is lots of ashes on the blanket. I do not know what Jonas will say about his new horse blanket." Dot's ash besprinkled head came in view, scrambling up the back step, with Allie's pale face, all "eyes," following. As we clasp our darling to our bosom, we realize at once how near the sunbeam from out our hearts and home had been taken. "You see, ma'm, Dot is not hurt—only my wrist is scraped up a little, when the barrel edge came down so." "You are a splendid girl—a brave, thoughtful child, of whom any mother should be proud! You acted nobly in saving my babe! I will reward you for your promptness. You did a splendid thing!" So dabbing the cork of the "cure all" bottle to the abrasure on her wrist—which was only "scraped up a little"—she is urged to use all haste in taking that "bottle of stuff" to her mother. She receives "running" directions from us as to applying it, etc. We call after her: "Susie, no doubt your mother can bear the pain of her hand better if you were to tell her what a brave little girl she was." It is night; the stillness is "almost heard"; the darkness "almost felt"; the ticking of the tall old fashioned clock is painfully audible to us; we are so nervous—wakeful; our minds running on and on, quite beyond our control at times. The day has been a trying one. What with getting a hurried dinner, our trip to town, our "doctoring" of our neighbor, has been too much for us. The night grows chilly; we draw the coverlet closer—chilly chills! We are thinking of chills. "Quinine? Yes, ma'm; we do sell a great deal of quinine now. So many have chills." Here a new feature is given our thoughts; our "better self" confronts us, calling us to task, as they often do when in the stillness of night we revert to the day's doings—calling this action, that motive, in question. Thank God for "better selves," our "better natures." The searching inquiry, the true accusation—trying us as no other tribunal can—condemns us as no other judge will—stripping our faults and short comings of their guise or excuse! Ah, our mind runs riot! "Many have chills!" O, you recreant, ungrateful! You failed to give God the praise. You should have said to that drug clerk: "The Lord has been very good to us this year; has blessed us with health." You could have done this much without the "cant" so despised by the world in Christians; but instead you took the praise. You forgot the hand which has sheltered, guided and lovingly kept you and yours; that gave you what power you may have had in your wonderful care of your dear ones. Ah! you have denied Him! "What is that? We are so nervous. Just a mouse scampering over head." That house snake we saw yesterday, I suppose, is after it. Snake! Dear me, how the word makes us thrill. Our "better selves" mounts guard again. Snake, "and a copperhead at that." You did not tell your son to thank God for his preserving care; thank him that he was given the courage to do as he did, that help was nigh. Not a word did you say. You could have sown that tiny seed in his boyish heart then made fit for the reception by his narrow escape from death. No, you only praised him, made quite a hero of him. That boy should have returned to his work with an exalted opinion of your God and an assurance of your Christianity, bearing with him the blazing testimony of a loving Heavenly Father, in the fact of his safety, his freedom from the deadly

poison once so near. Oh! so busy. Busy mothers too often so busy you cannot even point the way to heaven. Yes, you were thankful no doubt in your heart; but you did not teach your boy to know "from whence came his help." Ah! you have denied Him. The hours grow apace, our restlessness increases. It seems to be contagious. Little Dot in her crib near us throws out her hand, murmurs in her sleep, perhaps groans. Ah, ma, "only a few ashes in her hair, ma'm," comes to our mind. Our unfailing monitor appears again. "You did not testify of the gracious Savior in providing a way of safety for your child. No expression of thanksgiving escaped your lips in the hearing of the untaught girl who has an unchristian mother and never hears 'Thank God' from the depths of a fervent heart. This was your chance to show her your faith and trust in one who never faileth—your dependence in the time of need." "You have"—O we can bear no more. We cry from out the depths: "Lord I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." Our eyes are opened to the fact of our faithlessness, and with humble hearts we resolve anew to 'hold fast to our profession' and renew our covenant—hoping all things. So, often—

"We are so thoughtless and so slow To catch the sunshine 'till it slips away." OCCASIONAL.

METHODIST MUTUAL INSURANCE.

Our present method of insuring and neglecting to insure much of our church, parsonage and school property, is certainly a great mistake, if not a sin of both commission and omission. A "surplus fund," or capital stock, will not be necessary to resolve the entire Southern Methodist Church into a thoroughly organized Mutual Methodist Insurance Company that will enable us to hold our property in perfect assurance with an amount of money but little exceeding ten per cent. of the premiums we now pay to vast companies who are amassing fortunes from our very life-blood. The church of which I am pastor is now insured for three years in the very best companies of the world. For every five thousand dollars, we had to pay in advance a premium of one hundred dollars. Although these companies are the very best, yet if we were to burn to-night the possible technicalities so common in such insurance might very much delay our rebuilding. The plan suggested by the head of this article will doubtless keep us perfectly insured for an amount probably not exceeding ten dollars on the hundred of the sum we are now paying. We could begin to rebuild as soon as the fire subsided, knowing that our church at large would not stand on technicalities when the general interest of the church demanded our immediate restoration.

The plan could be worked in connection with our Parent Board of Church Extension at Louisville. It might possibly be best to have a district and separate office at Nashville, St. Louis or Kansas City, where one expert layman could do the work for our entire church in every land. His office rent, stationery, and salary would be all the capital stock or expense necessary to inaugurate the work. We will need no treasurer, and there will be no danger of a debt or a surplus fund. Let the General Conference project the work and fix its fulcrum, and the college of Bishops appoint the Secretary. This officer can then catalogue every district in every Annual Conference, and at once communicate with every Board of Trustees through the Presiding Elders and Pastors in charge. Then let every Board of Trustees wishing to insure their church estimate its value, and with the endorsement of the Pastor and Presiding Elder send the said valuation to the Secretary with \$1 for matriculation. This small initiation fee will provide all the expense of launching the entire work. The Secretary can then number and catalogue every church sending its dollar enrollment, whose valuation is duly endorsed by Pastor and Presiding Elder, according to conference, district, circuit or station. The catalogue to set forth not only the name of the church, but its number, valuation, location, conference, district, presiding elder, pastor and name of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees of every church insured should be furnished with a catalogue of all the property included in the association.

When a church is burned, let the General Secretary begin at the head of the list and make an assessment at the rate of one dollar per thousand dollars on as distinct number of churches to rebuild the one burned. When the second church is burned, let the assessment in the catalogue begin where the first assessment left off and thus on to

the end of the list. Suppose a church in Georgia is burned, and our church at Independence, Mo., should be in that part of the catalogue to be taxed—our valuation is \$30,000—the Secretary would call on us for \$20, or one percent on our valuation. If it fell to our lot twice a year to be thus taxed, we would only be paying ten per cent. on the sum of money advanced for our present insurance.

When the trustees of the church burned in Georgia telegraphed their loss to the General Secretary, he would start a postal card by the next mail to us, directed thus: "To Dr. C. JACKSON, Secretary, Board Trustees, First M. E. Church, South, Independence, Mo.

On the opposite side of this postal would be about this language: METHODIST MUTUAL INSURANCE ASS'N., Office No. 53, Broad Street, NASHVILLE, Tenn., June 15, 1890. Dear Bro.—You are hereby notified that property No. 45, of the North Geor-

gia Conference was damaged by fire last night to the amount of \$2000. To raise said amount all members of the St. Louis Conference, and No. 1 to No. 75 of the Southwest Missouri Conference have been assessed \$1 on each \$1000 of the valuation of property. Please remit your \$20 by return mail to

JOHN SMITH, Secretary.

The Secretary of our Board of Trustees would turn at once to No. 45 of the catalogue, and at a glance get the status of the church destroyed in Georgia, and then forward the \$20 by the next mail. The following Sunday the pastor would raise the amount in the penny collection; and in so doing tie the hearts of the two churches into an indissoluble bond of sympathy.

With such a plan the old Grecian myth can be realized, making every church a possible Pileolix, to rise out of its own ashes as soon as the fires are extinguished. W. B. PALMORE, INDEPENDENCE, MO.



Is better than any soap; handier, finer, more effective, more for the money, and in the form of a powder for your convenience. Takes, as it were, the fabric in one hand, the dirt in the other, and lays them apart—comparatively speaking, washing with little work. As it saves the worst of the work, so it saves the worst of the wear. It isn't the use of clothes that makes them old before their time; it is rubbing and straining, getting the dirt out by main strength. For scrubbing, house-cleaning, washing dishes, windows and glassware, Pearline has no equal.

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WHAT REV. C. H. BUCHANAN SAYS OF IT.

The News' management received the following at its Galveston office recently, which clearly indicates that in some quarters, at least, its efforts in the direction of procuring and publishing reports of the different Conferences are appreciated:

TO THE NEWS.—Please let me thank you and your correspondent at Huntsville for the very satisfactory and, in the main, correct manner in which you have reported the proceedings of the Texas Conference, late assembled at Huntsville. The few inaccuracies occurring in the list of appointments were about the only variations in our order of business. C. H. BUCHANAN, P. S.—Such favors will guarantee to THE NEWS a welcome visit to future sessions of the Conference.

THE SUNDAY AND WEEKLY EDITIONS OF THE DALLAS NEWS AND THE GALVESTON NEWS contain an absorbingly interesting story, entitled "Two Worlds." This will be followed by others. Carefully selected Miscellaneous Matter for family reading, together with full reports of Press Dispatches and Special Telegrams, appear in every issue, and no effort is spared to make THE NEWS an indispensable necessity to one and all.

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Our Christmas Sermon.

THE GLORY OF THE INCARNATION.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke II:14). Christmas is the day agreed upon by Christians to commemorate the birth of our Saviour—an event which, rightly understood, ought to fill every Christian soul with joy, and break every sinner's heart with penitence. By the common chronology Christ was born of the Virgin Mary in the year of the world four thousand and four, and eighteen hundred and eighty-eight years in the past. The word Christmas is compounded of the two words Christ and mass, the latter meaning a festival. As to when this festival was first instituted, I am not now informed. It is very certain, however, that it was not handed down by the earliest Christians, or there would be more certainty about the date. But we need not pause to inquire after the origin of the word Christmas, nor when men first began to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. Nor need we stop to ask if the 25th of December is the correct day of the month or the exact time of the year the Prophet of Nazareth was born. The day and the month and the year can only be numbered among the probabilities. Let it suffice us to know then that it is the day fixed by common consent. It is not the day we celebrate, but the event. Would to God that every nation and individual under the sun would commemorate the greatest event that has ever happened to the world in the spirit of the angels who sang its glory to the shepherds of Bethlehem! Then would the nations blossom with the smiles of Jehovah, and bend with the fruits of heaven; then would the individual's heart swell with gladness, and his face would shine with the halo of salvation. But let us stop to consider the import of the text: I ask first, how could the birth of Jesus give glory to God in the highest? Glory is one of the words to which it would be difficult to fix any one definite meaning, custom has used it in so many different ways. Its primary meaning, says Mr. Webster, is clear, bright, splendor, as when we speak of the glory of the sun. It is a word used very much in praise; and when it is used to signify a quality or property of a person, we understand that it represents a somewhat that elicits praise or calls forth admiration. So the word perhaps has come to mean fame or honor, from the fact that any excellent quality in a person calls forth praise as brilliant colors call forth admiration. When we speak of the glory of God, perhaps the mind at first adverts to the supernatural light or splendor supposed to surround the Divine Being. But the term "the glory of God," is most properly used to represent the perfections of the divine attributes. So absolute are the attributes in their perfections that an attempt to circumscribe them with thought would be as vain as an attempt to fix the boundary lines of infinity. When I speak of the glory of God, I think I mean something, and so I do; but I know as little about what I mean as I know about the limits of space. The angels who excel in strength, who wait upon the ministrations of the Almighty, and who have been looking into the mysteries of the universe, and searching the deep things of God since the first dawn of creation, doubtless comprehend to a much greater extent the glory of God than do men. But even their minds, could they but for a moment take in the divine perfections, would soon beneath the topless heights, and their brain would grow dizzy over the awful depths. None but God himself can comprehend to the fullest extent his own glory. Yet we may behold and wonder. And the angels who have been watching the movements of Jehovah from the very beginning of their existences, by some new manifestation, may see further into the glory of the Most High than they had even anticipated. Such doubtless was the case when they expressed their unbounded praise in the words, "Glory to God in the highest."

It is evident that some striking manifestation of the perfections of Deity had raised their conceptions of the divine glory to the highest degree possible to them, and they gave vent to their feelings in the strongest expression of praise possible. That manifestation was the Word made flesh. Although we may be left to conjecture in matters so far out of reach to man, yet our conjectures may not appear to be founded other than on sound reason. Plying then the guidance of the Holy Ghost that we may not indulge in improbabilities, nor transcend the bounds of sound reason, let us proceed to answer the question: How does the birth of Jesus manifest the glory of God in the highest? The answer to this question I have already hinted will be: By manifesting the divine attributes in their absolute perfection.

Let us notice first how the attribute justice is set forth by the incarnation of Christ.

No doubt it will be said that the justice of God is more directly vindicated by the sufferings and death of our Saviour. So it is. But this perfection of deity is as clearly manifested and shines out as brilliantly through the incarnation itself; for when the Word was made flesh he took upon him humanity subject to all its misfortunes, death not excepted. He was not even above temptation; "for we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

It appears from revelation that Jesus was as the Son of man, subject to all the temptations to which humanity was subject, but as the Son of God he was God himself, possessed of all the attributes of deity. And if at all possible for the Son of man to have yielded to temptation, the Son of God removed every shadow of probability. When God was made flesh he was in the same sense and at the same time made subject to death. When he was born of a woman, he was born unto troubles, and though perfectly innocent and holy in his life, he who knew no sin was made to bear the sin of the whole world. From the time he was clothed with humanity he was the Lamb of God offering himself the sin-offering for every man. And though the divinest stroke of justice was stayed until the hour when Jesus said, "It is finished," yet all the storm of sorrow suffered by the crucified Son of man was foreshadowed in the act of incarnation. It was then that the arm of justice was raised, and it only awaited the appointed moment to do its work of execution. It was when the Divinity stooped to take upon him humanity subject to death, when instead of the joy which was set before him he condescended to endure the cross, despising the shame, that the most perfect manifestation of divine justice was foreshadowed in the minds of the angels. For at least four thousand years, and it may be for millions, they had looked upon their fellow angels enduring the most intense suffering on account of their transgressions. Self-tempted, they had fallen into the bottomless pit from whence there was no rescue, not even in the boundless regions of God's mercy. But they were not the only creatures who had sinned. Man, though made a little lower than the angels, perhaps, yet in the likeness of God, had raised his hand in rebellion against the Divine will. Though tempted by the devil, yet freely he had sinned, and therefore ought to suffer the penalties of justice. Yet provisions had been made for his escape. What! has God ceased to be just? It is true that Adam was tempted by Satan, but he sinned of his own accord. Then can God let the rebels live and be just? Surely he cannot be unjust, for the torments of devils deny it. Yet something good is intended for man—a Redeemer is promised.

Now this involves another of the divine attributes—the mercy of God. Everything that had been created by the hand of omnipotence bore upon it the marks of goodness. Every creature as it took its place among the host of his works seemed to add but another page to the book of nature to describe his wonderful benevolence. Until the rebellion of the third part of heaven not a jar had disturbed the equilibrium of the universe, nor had a single discord rippled the song of the morning stars. The song of praise flowed from every creature's soul, and God's own picture of a pure heart sat upon every one's countenance. Every eye flashed with the fire of affectionate love, and every face shone with the light of pure happiness. But the harmony of government had been disturbed and the peace of heaven had been broken. Pride and undue ambition had lifted their heads above law, and the creature had rebelled against the Maker. Justice demanded that the rebels be punished, while mercy would demand, if there were any possible way without infringing on the rights of justice, that they be forgiven; for pure love would not infringe on the rights of justice so much as by a hair's breadth. The doctrine that they cordic is only one of the horrid offsprings of the devil. But when there was no way to be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly, neither love nor justice would suffer the guilty to infringe upon the rights of the innocent, nor would either suffer them to go unpunished. They both united in the condemnation of the angels that kept not their first estate, and the dungeon of darkness to which omnipotence has confined them is still singing both the justice and love of God. All this had been witnessed by the proclaimers of our text. And when the happiness

of man had been destroyed through the instrumentality of the damned spirits burning with revenge, the attributes of justice and goodness had already been too well defined to allow the least shadow of doubt as to their perfection. No doubt the highest sons of God had learned to regard man as their brother, and as he was made in the image of the Most High, they regarded him as ranking high in the affections of the divine bosom. They were not only anxious as to what would be the results of his transgression, but they knew, while justice cannot be mocked, that the resources of love would be exhausted in order to justify the ungodly. The fact that the rebels were permitted to live while they were in some sense suffering the severe penalties of the law, and at the same time guarded by the ever-waking watch-care and the tenderest mercy of the great Jehovah, created in their minds a hope that a scheme of redemption had been devised. But how could this be?

Here again is involved the attribute of divine wisdom.

The mystery of the scheme of human redemption at once became the study of the angels, and great indeed must be the depth of the wisdom by which it was devised if the greatest created minds which shine continually in the presence of God were not able to comprehend it. Yet we have no reason to believe that they did, for we learn from one of the apostles that in his day they were still desiring to look into these things. If then the depths of wisdom involved in the scheme of human redemption was too great for these mighty sons of God to fathom, would it not be the utmost folly for fall thought, clogged with flesh and blood, to attempt to touch its bottom? Yet in our weakness we may be allowed to conjecture a few things. May we not conjecture, therefore, that one of the greatest mysteries connected with the salvation of man was how the demands of justice could be met, and yet the sinner be forgiven? To let the guilty go unpunished would not only be to destroy all just government, but it would be to introduce discord and confusion, and destroy the peace and happiness of the universe. It would be both unjust and unmerciful to the innocent to have their rights invaded upon and their happiness destroyed by the wicked. It would destroy all reverence and love for God, and thus every living soul would become a burning hell. How then is it possible for the sinner to be rescued? It is impossible for him by any future act of obedience to atone for his past transgressions, and thus exonerate himself. It would be unjust for God to require any other creature to suffer in his stead even if it were possible for him to do so. And could God suffer? Could he become subject to his own law? Who even among the angels could believe it? So the plan must have been beyond the power of any created mind to devise or even comprehend. So they could only study the scheme, and await the event. So we may conjecture that with the most eager curiosity they studied every mishap that befell the world, and pondered every blessing that fell upon the path way of man. With an earnest solicitude they watched every movement of God, and every change he made in the affairs of his rebel sons. With a diligent ear they caught every word that was uttered with reference to this great mystery, and with a searching eye they gathered in every ray of light that fell from the throne of heaven upon a sin-cursed race. They pried into every prophetic vision, and even wondered at the messages they themselves bore to the children of men. Thus age after age pages of light were added to the book in which they studied the divine perfections. The volume of light had been continually increasing, until at last when the hour was come the Logos of Jehovah was made flesh, and dwelt among us. The Sun had risen; the universe was flooded with new light; the angels were overwhelmed; the attributes—justice, wisdom and love—like the light of a thousand suns pouring upon their vision, was seen as they had never been seen before. Unable to contain longer they shouted, and the walls of the universe responded: Glory to God in the highest. The great book was now open in which every creature in the wide realms of space might come and read the character of his Governor. Here was the divinest portraiture of the perfections of the eternal Godhead ever made known; the point at which all the attributes harmonized; the focus in which all the rays of divine light concentrate. The incarnation of the Son of God was from that time forever to be the grand specter in analysis in which the glory of God was to be studied. If any devil damned entertained the least hope that justice would grow weary with punishing, or that the sentence of the law would ever be abrogated, or if any creature standing out in the infinity of space ever for a moment supposed that God would wink at sin or pass by the guilty, let them come and read in the incarnation of Jesus that God was too just to spare his own Son; and rather than let the sinner go unpunished he himself stooped to the shame of the cross. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," for "our God is a consuming fire." If any one of all God's creatures has ever doubted his mercy, then let him come and look into the scheme of human redemption and learn that it is great to speak a word from naught but greater to redeem. If any poor soul who reads this sermon be burdened with guilt and conscious of being lost, feels that "no one cares

for me," let him come and read in the divinest of revelations: that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If the angels of heaven, overawed by the manifold powers of Omnipotence, have any doubts as to the equal extent of divine wisdom, then let them continue to look into the plan of salvation, and after they have prolonged the search through the countless ages to come, they will only lift their heads to cry out, O the depths, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.

But of all creatures, the most benefited by the incarnation is fallen man. More than all other men should rejoice over the strange event; for that which brought glory to God in the highest brought on earth also "peace and good will toward man." God was come himself to sit upon the throne of humanity and break the spears of his enemies; to dry up the rivers of blood and to make the earth blossom with the flowers of peace. First there was to be peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is pre-eminently the expression of good will to men. It is called the gospel of reconciliation. The carnal mind is enmity against God. The mind of man is at variance with the mind of Jehovah. Jesus came to destroy this enmity; to harmonize the human will with the divine will. He was both God and man. In him the divinity and humanity were forever united. So that representatively the most perfect reconciliation was accomplished in his own person. Through him a way was opened that the rebel children of the Father might return. A fountain was opened up in the house of David whose waters should be for the cleansing of the people, and the tree was planted whose fruit should be for the healing of the nations. The demands of justice had been met, and the yearnings of mercy had been gratified. Instead of the fear which hath torment and the hatred which destroys the rest of the soul, reverence, love and joy were to reign supreme. The human heart which had been so long the den of murders, thefts, and adulteries, through the provision of the gospel was to become the receptacle of divine grace. Nothing ever conceived by the human mind can exceed in glory the triumph of the gospel in its conquest upon the unregenerate heart. The correction of moral evil had been the problem of ages. No scheme of philosophy, no school of correction, no method of discipline, except the gospel of Christ, has ever made a single pure heart. The most exalted characters we have any knowledge of, unenlightened by revelation, practiced crimes which it would be indecent even to mention. Yet the simple proclamation of "peace on earth and good will toward men," as the result of the incarnation, has checked the course of nature itself, and converted the most unclean into perfect purity. The Lord said through the prophet: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." These words have been wonderfully accomplished since the shepherds of Bethlehem listened to the proclamation of the angels at the birth of Him who was to be king, prophet, and priest over his people. Well did the wise men of the East offer gifts of gold, frankincense and myrr to the babe of Mary; for though at that time a perfect model of weakness clothed in the same humanity sanctified, he was to be endowed with all power in heaven and earth. The same babe which they worshipped then was to walk the seas and rebuke the winds into obedience. The touch of his finger was to give sight to the blind, and the sound of his voice was to raise the dead from their graves. His looks of kindness and his words of mercy were to dry up the mourner's tears and make the lame leap for joy. By the principle of love he was to establish his kingdom and overturn the nations of the earth, and so establish peace and good will among men as well as between God and men. The only rule which was to govern the conduct of his subjects one toward another was: "Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you." This law, like a small grain of mustard seed, was planted in the hearts of the few disciples who became his followers in the land of Judea. And like the seed growing up into a mighty tree, the kingdom of heaven has been developing into a mighty kingdom from that day to this. It requires no extraordinary powers of introspection to discover the heaven spreading in the measure of meal, nor does it require the presence of any great philosophical mind to reveal the causes of its growth. The way is so plain that a man may run and read. The holy lives and simplicity of the primitive Christians was an epistle known and read of all men. The warm attachment they had for each other, and the willingness with which they gave their lives for the truth's sake, baffled the designs of cunning and subdued their enemies into submission. The ashes of the saints burned at the stake, and the altars of the church streaming with the blood of the martyrs, are weapons that outconquered the swords of the Cæsars and the cannons

of Napoleon. The policy of Christ's kingdom has ever been love and peace. And to-day love and peace are the mightiest monarchs known to men. It is a plain logic by which this power may be proven. The caution with which the nations go to war, and the sacrifices they make to preserve peace, are but so many arguments proving that they have adopted the policy of Christ's kingdom as the best. The late adjustment of the Alabama affair by arbitration on the part of the government of Great Britain and these United States, before the reformation would have been looked upon as a silly subterfuge of cowardice. The manner in which the unpleasantness of our own government has been adjusted, the conquered few being allowed to enjoy the same rights and privileges as the conquerors, adds a new page to the history of the world, which was not foreshadowed in any previous age. If the few have suffered unjustly, then it is so much the more wonderful, for those who deal unjustly are always the farthest from mercy. But it is not difficult to account for these matters. It is the leaven of Christianity pervading the whole lump. It is the peace and good will to men proclaimed by the messengers of God near the City of David. It is the Shekinah of heaven let down upon earth. It is the trees of heaven ripening with the fruits of glory. It is the stone mountain falling on the feet of iron and clay. It is the grand ureka of God himself made manifest. The saying of Lord Bacon, "We are the ancients," is as true to Christianity as of learning, and it is as foolish to go to the apostolic age for Christianity as to go to the child to get the mature thoughts of men. God grant that we are even now standing in the dawn of that day when every nation under the sun shall say by its deeds: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," and "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." Now, if Christmas is the day we have determined upon to commemorate the event productive of such an eternal weight of glory, how else should we commemorate it but by honoring Him whose birth we profess to celebrate? Shall we celebrate the birthday of Jesus with drunken revels and polluted scenes of debauchery? Will maidens fair mingle with fiends of the pit in the ball-room and dance their souls to hell on the very day they profess to be rejoicing over the salvation of the world? Will devils, clothed in human flesh, decoy silly men behind a bar of lattice-work and persuade them to drink the liquid fire that will consume their own souls and destroy the peace and happiness of home on Christmas day? Will the youth of a few summers only forget the law of his father and bring shame and disgrace upon his mother by indulging the wild and reckless spirit of licentiousness at the very time when he ought to remember that justice will not be mocked? In view of the great love of God expressed in the gift of his Son methinks such mockeries of tendered mercy would be enough to hang the altars of heaven with mourning and make the blackest fiend of the pit shudder with horror. But with the disgust of horror let us leave this dark picture of human depravity and return to the song of the angels. According to the accepted chronology eighteen hundred and eighty-eight years have passed away, but the shouts of the angels still reverberate along the skies, and its echoes fall upon the Christian's ear sweeter than the fabled music of Olympus. It has been the song of angels and the redeemed for nearly two thousand years, and yet it is as new to-day as when the shepherds caught its first strains. It has lost none of its sweetness with the lapse of ages, nor have the messengers of peace grown weary with singing it. The best way to celebrate this glorious event is to convert souls to Christ. The grandest Christmas any man ever enjoyed was the day on which he was born of God. That day, my brethren, should not be summed up in twenty-four hours, but it should be a Christmas fresh with the joys of salvation forever. And now while the Bride of Christ in her onward march as grand as the light of the sun and as beautiful as a thousand full moons walking the highways of heaven re-echoes the same strains as fresh as when they originated in the spontaneity of God's own love, what sinner will recline upon the bosom of Jesus and eat bread in the kingdom of God? God grant this Christmas may be the birthday of a million souls born unto God.

RELIGIOUS AND OTHERWISE. We will defer reviewing the mail list until after the holidays. Let all subscribers whose time has expired see the agent at once and renew; or remit the amount direct to this office. After January 1, 1889, the ADVOCATE will cease its visits to the homes of all who fail to renew by that date. IN OUR VISITS to the Texas Conferences we were much encouraged and think the outlook for the ADVOCATE this year promising. Let the boom continue. Roll up the subscription list. No Methodist in Texas can afford to be without the ADVOCATE, and as much as hith in us we propose that it shall be an indispensable help to every preacher. The greater the number of subscribers in each charge the more it will help the preacher in his work. THE ADVOCATE rejoices with the brethren in the grand receptions they are receiving. If they do not do a grand work this year then we fear that some preachers are a little modest about reporting. Their modesty should not cause them to keep silence here. They should remember that the good example of their charges may stir up the pure minds of others by way of remembrance. The re-

port a brother makes this year may remind a dozen other charges to do the same thing next year—and by the way it is not too late, let us suggest to those charges which forgot to give their preacher a reception, to make him happy yet. Remember this is Christmas, and New Year's Day, etc. Brethren send on your reports.

BISHOP VINCENT of the M. E. Church is said to be the leader in a new departure by announcing that "the itinerants' club" will hold a spring session in Lexington, Ky., next April. The entire four-year's course of conference study will be reviewed in lectures, class-exercises, and conversations. Lectures will be delivered on the duties of the ministry and the laity; lecture-lessons will be given on congregational singing, the conduct of children's classes, Sunday-school organization and management. The under graduates and examining committees are expected to be present at these lectures. This looks a little like Chautauquizing the Itinerancy.

READERS of this paper will remember the address of the Committee of One Hundred appointed by a public meeting at Boston to consider the efforts of the Catholics to control the public schools. The vote in Boston reveals the fact that the Catholics suffered a great defeat. The result of the vote for members of the school committee was the election of the entire ticket nominated by the Republicans, endorsed by the Committee of One Hundred. The only member of the present board re-elected is Miss Mastins, and among the eleven there are no Catholics. Sixteen thousand nine hundred and forty-seven is the approximate number of women who voted, in a total registration of about 21,500, or nearly 80 per cent.

We have now the names of about fifteen worthy persons who are not able to subscribe for the ADVOCATE. Our publishers propose to donate one-half the subscription price to all such persons. Who will donate the other half? Cannot these and others be made happy with the ADVOCATE as a Christmas gift for the next twelve months? This is a most opportune time to help the publishers in this good work.

PERSONALS.

- The Rev. L. M. Little, a superannuated preacher of the South Carolina Conference, died December 5, 1888.
- Bishop Galloway will hold the North Mississippi Conference instead of Bishop Keener, at the latter's request.
- Rev. John A. Broadus, D. D., of Louisville, Ky., delivers the next course of Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale Theological Seminary.
- The Montezuma and Southern Evangelist have united under the name of the Evangelists, and Dr. D. C. Kelley has been engaged as editor.
- The Rev. S. H. Weirlein, formerly of Texas and La., now of St. Louis, has not been able to meet his congregation for two weeks on account of sickness.
- Central Advocate: Bishop Taylor sailed from New York on the steamer Gallia for the Congo via Liverpool, on Saturday, Dec. 1. Quite a number of his friends were at the pier to bid him farewell.
- The Nashville Advocate announces that it is now hoped that Bishop McTearle has passed the crisis of his attack, though he is quite sick yet. No doubt the whole church will rejoice at his improvement, and pray for his complete recovery.
- Times-Democrat, New Orleans: Rev. Dr. John Matthews, formerly stationed in this city, where he was much admired, is drawing just now immense congregations to the Centenary Methodist Church in St. Louis. Dr. Matthews was always a plain speaking, trenchant pulpit orator.
- Rev. C. H. Doering, who organized the first German mission in New York City, and who prosecuted missionary work in Germany for thirty-three years, is spending his old days in retirement at Berea, Ohio. He was converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church under the ministry of the late Rev. Wesley Downing.
- The Rev. W. S. Woodward, of Lexington, Mo., in a private note, says: My visit to Texas was a continuous oration. Everywhere the preachers treated me so kindly, and the people were so much like missionaries. The truth is I met many whom I had known here. Were I younger I would certainly make Texas my home.
- Nashville Advocate: Our brother, Rev. James A. Lyons, has returned from his protracted Texas trip, impressed with the brightness of that State, the energy and zeal of the people, and the grand possibilities of Methodism among them. While still true to Holston with her breezy hills and silver streams, he is considerably fixated at present, and wherever he is and the publishing interests he represented were kindly treated.
- Arkansas Methodist: Bishop Key's address to the class of seven for admission into full connection at White River Conference, was the memorable event in the proceedings of the conference. While it was a profoundly solemn hour, it became an occasion for deep, spiritual joy, and many brethren rejoiced aloud. Aside from his ability and sweet spirit in the pulpit and in the chair, this address of Bishop Key completely captured his hearers and made them willing captives, not only of the speaker, but also of the church he loves so dearly and has so long and faithfully served.
- Southern Christian Advocate. He is courteous and benignant in his social intercourse, and no less so as a presiding officer. He is a man of supreme good sense, a deep thinker, a thorough theologian, and well versed in the history of Methodist legislation. He is a good parliamentarian without, and having the confidence and affection of all the preachers, he makes a most unexceptionable presiding officer. He is a man of faith and of prayer; and the brethren always feel well pleased to receive their appointments at his hands. No Bishop is more welcome to South Carolina Conferences than Bishop J. C. Keener.

SOUTHERN METHODIST NEWS.

- J. E. Squires has organized a church of eleven members at Rouse, Colorado.
- The Kansas City Preacher's meeting (Mo.) reported last week twenty additions, and one infant baptized. St. Louis: Eighteen additions, and one infant baptized. St. Joseph: Six additions.
- At the St. Louis preachers meeting, Bishop Grandbury touched on his delightful visit of six weeks to Virginia and North Carolina. Over twenty preachers received into the latter conference; in Virginia six. The North Carolina Colporteur sold over \$500 worth of books.
- Michael B. Corrigan from Lebanon Circuit, Searcy District; Augustus C. Graham from Beebe and West Point Circuits, Searcy District; Ashby F. Skinner from Mineral Circuit, Searcy District; Stephen F. Brown from Wheatley Circuit, Helena District; John W. Watson from Lorado Circuit, Newport District; William E. Bishop Mountain View Circuit, Batesville District; and Samuel G. Lape from St. Francis Mission, Jonesboro District, were admitted on trial into the White River Conference.
- Statistics of the Mississippi Conference. Local preachers 170; members, 38,483, a net gain of 3,290; adults baptized, 1,328; infants baptized, 1,435; Sunday-schools, 399; officers and teachers, 1,965; scholars, 15,905; collected for Conference claimants, \$5,101; church ex-

