

THE GOOD AND TRUE

A Good Man Never Knows How Good He Is Nor Stops to Learn

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these ye did it unto me."—Matt. xxv. 40.

If religion is wholly or essentially a matter of holding certain views or performing certain formal, specific acts there can be no serious difficulty in the way of determining the number of religious persons in any community. But if religion is an attitude of the soul and a trend of life it eludes all statistical endeavors.

When you have before you certain set prescribed tasks you can go about them deliberately, consciously; you may know when they are begun and when completed. But if you are developing ideals and seeking character it is likely to happen that the finest, fairest growth will take place when you are thinking nothing about its processes.

A child in the home becomes truthful, not by means of set periods daily in which it is exercised in veracity, but by the steady, unconscious acquisition of the habit of truth telling, until the truth becomes the only normal aim. So would it be with the acquisition of an affectionate character. It could not possibly come with observation, nor by direct endeavor toward it.

SO GROWS RELIGION

in the soul of man, not by efforts to become religious, but by steady living toward the best, always and at length habitually allowing the life to answer to all of life's stimuli by acts and thoughts and feelings that tend upward. One becomes good not by the attempt to be good, but by always yielding to the temptation to do good, by throwing the life into the stream of the good, by service for the good, and the true and worthy.

Character grows best when we are least conscious of it. Health is a matter not of physical inspection but of normal activity, whether it be health of body or of mind and spirit. A sane religion turns from the cant phrases about feeling good to consider what opportunities

there are for doing good; and the world grows weary of institutions professing to save, but standing helpless before its real needs.

But there are many who lack either the energy or the vision to make their religious life one of normal activity, and who therefore attempt to judge the piety of others by the tests which they find most convenient for themselves, who insist that they only are religious who pass through certain types of emotional feeling or who speak of a certain shippoleth.

No man needs to allow these self-constituted authorities to give him any concern even though they be many in number and

MIGHTY IN LUNG POWER.

He can be sure that if there be any advantage, an enriching or growth from religion, it will be found not by such flimsy tricks and devices but through earnest seeking after the good and true.

There is a tremendous amount of untabulated, unreported, and often unrecognized religion in the world. Men are doing the deeds and living the life of religion who might well be unwilling to wear any of its formal labels. Whenever a man answers to the best in himself affirmatively, whenever he seeks the good of others, he is turning toward the ultimate good; he is religious.

And the life that lives for these things, the man or woman who throws the weight of personality into the tide for better things—for nobler ideals, for truth and right, for the relief of needless sufferings and the removal of oppression and degradation, that life fights on with the Eternal, that one walks with God and belongs to the kingdom of heaven.

He who serves in love finds fellowship with the infinite and all embracing love. He who stoops to wipe a child's tear stained face has worshipped better than if he had sung as angels can. The sacred supper is the common meal we share in our need.

HENRY F. COPE.

THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, DEC. 26.

Lesson XIII. The Birth of Christ.

Matt. 2. 1-12. Golden Text, Matt. 1. 21.

Verse 1. Bethlehem of Judaea — The home of David, five miles south of Jerusalem. Also called Ephrathah (Mic. 5. 2). "Now a small white town on a spur running out east from the watershed." The supposed site of the nativity is marked by what is probably the oldest church in the world, the pillars being those of the ancient Basilica erected by the mother of Constantine the Great, about A. D. 330. Beneath is the Cave of the Nativity. This is hewn in the rocks and measures 38 by 11 feet. An inscription reads: "Here was born Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary." Rock-cut caves for cattle are common in the Hebron hills.

Herod the king—The Herods were Idumeans, but the father of this Herod (the Great) had embraced the Jewish religion, and by Julius Caesar had been made procurator of Judaea in B. C. 47. Hence Herod the Great was brought up a Jew. He was made king of Judaea at the instigation of Antony in B. C. 40. He began his rule with great rigor and cruelty, and to the end was vengeful and implacable. His thirst for blood led to the murder of his wife and two sons. His chief distinction was the building of the temple. He died in B. C. 4.

Wise-men—Same word found in Acts 13. 6, 8. But here used in a good sense for a sacerdotal class among the Persian, Babylonian, and other Oriental nations, who "read men's destinies on the face of the skies," and were in great favor "in an age when religion was dead and superstition had usurped its place." These astrologers had large influence, not only with the common people, but with statesmen and kings (Dan. 2. 48). Tradition says there were three of these wizards, and their names were, Caspar, Melchior, and Bal-

thasar. But this is unfounded. Came to Jerusalem—Naturally, as it was the capital.

2. Born King of the Jews — The appearance of the strange star would betoken a royal birth, and they must have known of the widely cherished Jewish expectation, and would learn from the prophecies that the hope of a Messiah centered in Judaea.

To worship him—See note on verse 11.

3. Herod . . . was troubled—He was now an old man in his dotage. He had gained his throne by craft, through the favor of Rome, and had kept it by bloody cruelty. From the beginning of his reign he had been pursued by a dread of being deposed, and only shortly before this a plot for his overthrow grew out of a prediction that the Messiah was to drive him from the throne. Herod had put down this revolt with blood.

All Jerusalem with him — The people knew what was likely to happen when Herod was seized with a fit of jealousy. Already he had shed blood in his own home on account of his suspicions, and he had begun his reign by killing off the entire Sanhedrin, whose members were hostile to him. His malignancy would know no bounds when he heard of a new king of the Jews being born.

4. Gathering . . . chief priests and scribes—Herod had reconstituted this august body, but in a way pleasing to himself. But they were the chief theologians of the nation, and the recognized authority on such questions as to where the Christ should be born.

The Christ—The word has a two-fold meaning. First, Jesus is King, sitting on the throne as God's anointed. Secondly, He is the Person through whom God's kingdom comes, and God's promises are fulfilled (Denney, in Jesus and the Gospel).

5. The prophet—Micah. 6. Bethlehem was the birthplace of David and his home in the shepherd days; and as such was dear to the peasant heart, for it linked the coming Messiah with the life of the lowly. Their governor was to be a shepherd, not such a one as the tyrant nobles who oppressed them at Jerusalem. The quotation is not an accurate translation of either the Hebrew or Greek, but

free paraphrase put in popular form.

7. Exactly what time the star appeared—In order that he might know how old the child was. The wise men appeared in Jerusalem about two years after setting out.

8. Exactly—Not the repetition, indicating the old king's solicitude lest any oversight should rob him of his prey.

That I also may come and worship him—A thinly disguised pretext, which shows that Herod's passion had dulled the far-seeing wisdom displayed by him in the earlier part of his reign.

9. The star . . . went before them—A poetical way of saying that the wise men were guided in their course by the position of the star.

11. They came into the house—It must be remembered that Jesus had been taken up to Jerusalem when six weeks of age, for the purification (Luke 2. 22) was over and a sacrifice must be offered. Then the family returned to Bethlehem, and the crowds of the enrollment (Luke 2. 1-7) having departed, it would be easy to get accommodation. They seem to have intended to settle there permanently. The enforced flight into Egypt prevented.

Fell down and worshipped him—The usual method of paying homage to a ruler. The worship of these men, however, must have had something of religious devotion in it, in view of the fact that before them was God's guarantee of the fulfillment of his work.

Offered unto him gifts—In the East the custom still is not to approach a monarch without some gift. It is fitting that Christ should have the rarest gifts. The ancient interpreters saw in these particular presents, symbols—the gold, of royalty; frankincense, of Deity; myrrh, of his Passion (John 19. 39).

12. In a dream—The Magi were versed in the understanding of dreams.

Should not return to Herod—Who, thereupon, sought to carry out his brutal schemes regardless.

MISFORTUNE DOGGED HIM.

A lady who prides herself on being an ideal hostess, received a nasty set back at her last party.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said to a young man who arrived late. "Has your brother come too?"

"He sent his apologies," said the late arrival. "You see we have so many engagements just now, so we tossed up to see who should have the pleasure of coming to-night."

"Very good of you," said the hostess, who felt quite flattered. "What a brilliant idea, too! And, of course, you won't?"

"No," answered the young man unthinkingly, "I lost."

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KING EDKARD'S HOUSES.

Has So Many That He Lends Them to Save Expense of Upkeep.

There is a good deal of speculation in England as to who will have the offer of White Lodge from King Edwards if, as is expected, Mrs. Hortman resigns her tenancy owing to financial difficulties. It is an ideal spot for a residence, only just a few miles out of London, yet perfectly rural in all its surroundings.

The drawback to White Lodge is that the place, though not large is very expensive to keep up, and it was for this reason that several people refused the King's offer after the death of the Duke of Teck—including, so it was said at the time, at least one member of the royal family.

These extra residences around London prove rather an embarrassment of riches to the King, who does not need them himself. Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Balmoral and Sandringham are all the places the King and Queen need in the course of a year. Yet if not lived in these empty houses would be a drain on the privy purse in the matter of upkeep.

Almost all these superfluous houses have been at the King's disposal since he came to the throne. Laus, says The Gentlewoman, we have the Prince and Princess of Wales at Frogmore, Georgina Lady Dudley at Pembroke Lodge, Richmond; Colonel and Lady Sarah Wilson at the Stud House, Hampton Court; Sir Stanley and Lady Clarke at the Ranger's Lodge, Hyde Park, and so on.

EASIER TO NEGOTIATE.

"You look down in the mouth. Now, don't be borrowing trouble."

"Will you lend me 8?"

"Er—well, on second thought, perhaps you'd better go ahead and borrow the trouble."

NO NOVELTY.

"A temperance lecturer has proved that beer contains so much alcohol that it may be used as an illuminant."

"Nothing new in that, I can't drink three glasses of it without being all lit up."

What Signifies a Name?



Strong—The Blacksmith Weeks—The Drug Clerk



David—The Barber Growth—The Hair Tonic Man



Crow—The Undertaker —Life.

The Hospital for Sick Children

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REMEMBER That Every Sick Child in Ontario Whose Parents Cannot Afford to Pay for Treatment is Treated Free.

The Hospital for Sick Children had last year in its cots and beds 1,155 patients—383 of these were from 267 places in the Province. Sixty five per cent. were children of poor people who could not afford to pay. Since its organization the Institution has treated 13,613 children; 11,550 of these unable to pay and were treated free.

If you know of any child in your neighborhood who is sick or has any deformity send the name of the parent to the Secretary. The Hospital for Sick Children is not a local but a Provincial Charity for sick children of the poor man in any part of Ontario has some claim upon its help as the child who lives within the shadow of its walls in Toronto. There were 69 cases of Club Feet treated in the Hospital last year and 67 had perfect correction.



Just think of it—Your money can help the Hospital to do the good work of straightening the crooked limbs and club feet of little children. Please help us.

Please send contributions to J. Ross Robertson, Chairman, or to Douglas Davidson, Sec.-Treas., The Hospital for Sick Children, College St., Toronto.

A CANDID DOCTOR.

Physician and lawyers are sometimes charged with protracting profitable "cases" through months, and perhaps years, that could have been disposed of in a few days or weeks. One medical man, who had no temptation to that kind of practise, was frank enough to take advantage of the impeachment, and put the blame where it belonged.

A lady was very solicitous about her health. Every trifle made her uneasy, and the doctor was called immediately.

The doctor was a skilful man, and consequently had a large practise. It was very disagreeable to him to be so often called away from his other cases for nothing, and he resolved to take an opportunity of letting the lady see this. One day the lady observed a red spot on her hand, and at once sent for the doctor. He came, looked at her hand, and said: "You did well to send for me early."

The lady looked alarmed and asked: "Is it dangerous, then?" "Certainly not," replied the doctor. "To-morrow the spot would have disappeared and I should have lost my fee for this visit."