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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for December 22

Golden Text.—Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.—2 Cor. 9:15

The Lesson as a Whole

Christmas is a time of giving and receiving gifts. This agreeable custom is founded upon the blessed truth that God Himself is a giver and has lavished His wealth upon a poverty-stricken world by the "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) of His own beloved Son, as brought before us in what Luther called "The Miniature Bible," John 3:16; that great verse upon which we are asked to focus our attention today. To the Samaritan woman the Lord Jesus Christ said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John 4:10). In Romans 6:23 we read, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In his First Epistle John wrote, "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (chap. 5:11). This then is God's great Christmas gift to lost men, dead in trespasses and sins: eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ! Who can fathom the folly of the man who refuses so great a gift? Yet we are told that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). Sorrowfully the Lord Jesus said concerning many to whom He presented Himself in grace, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40).

At this festive season, when Christmas carols fill the air and the story of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is being heralded far and wide, let us pause and face the question: Have we received God's gift? To reject Christ is fatal. To receive Him means eternal life and peace with God.

Verse by Verse

John 3:16.—"God so loved..... that he gave." The gift of Christ is the expression of God's infinite love for a lost world. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ did not come into this scene and go to the cross in order to enable God to love us. He came as expressing that love (Rom. 5:8). In giving "his only begotten Son, God was giving Himself, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Now the Gospel message goes out to all men everywhere offering "everlasting life" freely to "whosoever believeth" on Jesus.

Eph. 3:14.—"For this cause I bow my knees." Paul had been speaking of God's eternal purpose of grace in Christ Jesus: the great mystery of the Church, which He died to redeem to Himself, and this stirred his heart to worship, thanksgiving, and prayer.

Verse 15.—"The whole family in heaven and earth." The entire family of the redeemed are all located either in Heaven or on earth. There is no middle place like purgatory, nor are those who have died in Christ lying unconscious in their graves.

Verse 16.—"According to the riches of his glory." From this wealth of glory all our blessing comes. Notice, it is not merely out of His riches, but according to those riches. A millionaire might give a few dollars out of his wealth, but that would not be according to his vast possessions. God gives liberally in accordance with the vastness of His wealth. "Strengthened with might by his Spirit." The indwelling Holy Spirit, given to us by God, is the source of all power for victory over sin and for witnessing to others.

Verse 17.—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Personally, Christ is in Heaven at the right hand of the Father. But faith enshrines Him in the loyal heart. Thus we are "rooted" like a tree, and "grounded" like a building "in love." God is love, so we as Christians are to be rooted and grounded in God.

Verse 18.—"Comprehend..... the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," of God's eternal purpose. Note that we have here four dimensions. This carries us beyond the natural into the spiritual.

Verse 19.—"To know the love..... which passeth knowledge." This sounds paradoxical, yet it is blessedly true. For just as a babe knows its mother's love and yet the reason for that love is incomprehensible to the child, so we know the love of Christ, but it is utterly beyond our comprehension why He should thus love sinners such as we. "Filled with all the fullness of God," or a better rendering is filled into all the fullness; just as a shell on the sea-

shore may be full, and filled into all the fullness of the ocean.

Verse 20.—"Able to do" — what? All we ask or think! Yes, but that does not tell the whole story. He is able to do "above all that we ask or think." More than this: "abundantly above all"; and still more: "exceeding abundantly above all." There is no limit to what God can do and will do for the one who trusts Him fully.

Verse 21.—"Throughout all ages, world without end." This is the strongest expression for eternity in the Bible. A literal rendering is "unto all generations of the age of the ages." The Church will be the vessel for the display of the glory of God by Christ Jesus for all the ages to come.

The Heart of the Lesson

God's love has been told out in the gift of His Son. In giving Him He gives all that Heaven possesses. According to His riches He lavishes His grace upon all who believe in the Lord Jesus, and so makes abundant provision to meet their every need for time and eternity. Nothing is too much for Him to do for those who have responded to His love by opening their hearts to receive His only begotten Son as their Saviour and Lord.

NOTICE TO MERCHANTS

The next issue of The Tribune will be put out on Dec. 24, Tuesday, just in time to extend Christmas greetings from the business people to their customers, if they have not taken the opportunity to do so in this current issue.

Our correspondents and others will kindly get in their copy on Monday next week, something that will greatly facilitate the paper getting out ahead of Christmas Day.

WOLVES ATTACKING HORSES AND CATTLE

Two Shetland Ponies Latest Victims in West—Plan Poisoning Measure

The Pas, Man., Dec. 16.—Small but vicious packs of timber wolves are making record numbers of attacks on domesticated and big game animals in Northern Manitoba this winter, it was learned today.

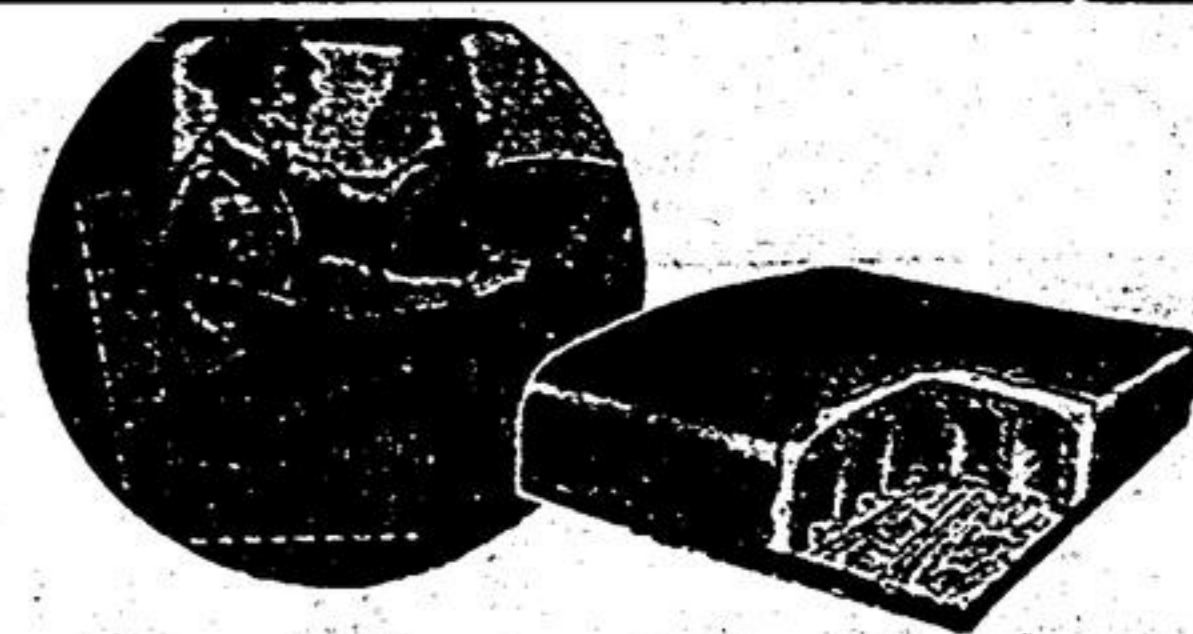
Latest victims of the raiders were two Shetland ponies owned by Ambrose Chaboyer, a trapper on the Saskatchewan River near here.

It is estimated that the wolves' toll now stands at more than 12 horses and cows as well as countless deer. Further evidence of the wolves' raiding was discovery of a massive bull caribou carcass on Lake Winnipeg.

Harvey Lagamodier, rancher near Westray, in the Pas River area, dis-

posed of his stock earlier in the year because, he said, "the wolves ate all my profits."

Game department officials believe the wolves migrated from the Opas-quai hills near the Saskatchewan border. Plans now being considered to relieve the menace are poisoning of recently killed carcasses, raising of the \$10 bounty or appointment of special wolf hunters.



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