

with maturity—let them not cloud the skies of the young. It would be like feeding strong meat to the infant to introduce too early the truths which, though they seem solemn, furnish the substantial joys of older hearts.

The opening mind of a child must first know the gladness that comes with receiving before it can understand how much happier one is who, by giving, brings brightness into the lives of others. The child learns gratitude as its heart is poured out in thanks for the remembrances that have been saved for this blessed day. The memory of Christmas seasons long ago makes us realize how little it takes to make little hearts overflow with thankfulness.

CHRIST'S LOVE FOR CHILDREN

The children are entitled to all the happiness they can contain at this festive season of the year, for they celebrate the birth of One who lifted the child to the highest eminence it has ever occupied. No one else has so fully appreciated the power of the child.

It was Christ who humbled the pride of the wise and prudent, by revealing to babes the truths that the older ones sometimes fail to learn. It was Christ who made the innocence, the open-heartedness and the trustfulness of the child the basis of the Christian's hope—"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3.)

To those who are grown, the Christmas season offers unlimited invitations to test the promise that more blessedness is to be derived from giving than from receiving. In the family, affection protects all from disappointment—needs are gratified, wishes expressed and unexpressed find fulfillment on this day and wants are anticipated. Parents are happier than the children and the children themselves passing from recipients to donors begin to learn the great lesson of life, namely, that happiness, as well as greatness, is measured by service—that life is estimated by its overflow rather than by its income.

THE DAY OF UNIVERSAL KINSHIP

But Christmas Day is too large to be limited to the family circle or to be confined within the radius of the fireside. The measureless affection of the Father, manifested in the gift of His Son, and the boundless love that prompted the Saviour's sacrifice touch the hearts of all who have taken Christ's name upon them, and the anniversary of His birth furnishes an occasion for the expression of gratitude.

At this season every worthy charity makes its strongest appeal, and the Christmas dinner is enjoyed in proportion as those who dine have remembered others besides themselves—others to whom they are not obligated except as the sense of kinship binds each to all. There should be no hungry people at any time, least of all on Christmas Day.

Christ did not confine His attentions to the deserving. His salvation was for all and He revealed to man a Father who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Many of the misfortunes that overtake men are undeserved—afflictions that are in no sense a punishment for sin. Even the punishment that comes as a just retribution for sin sometimes opens the way whereby the strong may help the weak. If thine enemy hunger, feed him.

THE GREAT FACT IN HISTORY

But Christmas turns our thoughts to larger subjects than physical needs. The wants of the body are imperative and brook no delay, but the Master who was touched by the hunger of the multitude taught that the bread of life was more important than the loaves and fishes; the same great Teacher who blest a cup of cold water pointed us to the priceless value of the water of life. No one so exalted little acts of kindness, and yet no one so understood relative values or so emphasized the great things of life.

Christmas is to us a sacred day because it turns our thoughts toward the Great Fact in history and to the Growing Figure of all time, and our gratitude for what He has brought into our lives should make us consider the large methods by which we may be able to make partial payments on the incalculable debt we owe.

May we not find one outlet for our devotion in a defense of His deity and in resistance to those who would curtail His claim to authority? Surely at this season they should speak in subdued tones who question His super-natural character, discredit the evidence of His Sonship, reject the miraculous in His life and dispute the fact of His resurrection.

Could a mere man have so impressed a world? If so, why have not other men enthralled succeeding generations for so many cen-

turies? Why has Christmas no rivals—why was Bethlehem's the only manger-cradle?

WHEN THE SKEPTIC IS SILENT

The skeptic may ridicule the Magi who followed the Star in search of the Messiah, but they will not quarrel with their own children on the morning of this glad day. They may call Christ a myth when He rebukes them in the loneliness of the library, but they will be silent in the nursery when the children acclaim the birth of a Child unlike all other children in the manner of His birth, in the sinlessness of His life and in the sublimity of His death.

Christmas furnishes the thoughtful an occasion to review the history of mankind and to note how the teachings of Him whose birth we celebrate have softened the harshness of ancient laws, introduced mighty reforms and moulded the manners of mankind. For a thousand years no really great improvement has been wrought in any quarter of the world that is not in harmony with His philosophy.

Whenever His Gospel has been carried and His words have been heeded man has been ennobled, his purposes purified and his possibilities enlarged. Whether the pupil be an individual, a nation, or all the world. His counsel has been equally helpful and the beneficence of His word equally demonstrated.

To the individual He has brought not only salvation, but security; not only a consciousness of sins forgiven, but a code of morals to be embodied in the life.

To the nation He has brought a knowledge of the exalting power of righteousness and of the invincible strength of truth. His philosophy, though simple enough to be understood by the unlettered, surpasses in its depth and breadth the learning of the schools.

THE LESSON THE WORLD IS LEARNING

The world is just now learning that His yoke is as easy for all mankind as it is for the individual and that His burden is the only burden that is light. The devil's burden has grown so heavy that the world is compelled to lay it down, after it has staggered up to the every verge of the abyss of universal bankruptcy.

At the time of the writing of this Bible talk we do not know what Christmas message the Arms Conference will issue to the world, but enough has already been done to make December 25, 1921, the happiest Christmas since Christ was born. There is joy enough for old and young. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord for the Gift of His Son.

A 3000-YEAR-OLD TRUTH FOR 1922

By WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BIBLE TEXT—LESSON FOR JAN. 1

(I Kings 12:12-20.)

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king saying, What portion have we in Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

Before taking up our talk for today it may not be out of place to spend a moment on the beginning of the new year.

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day have, from time immemorial, been singled out from all the rest of the year for special observance. The machinery of Father Time is so exquisitely adjusted that we pass from the old year to the new without a jolt or jar. Only the hands of the clock furnish evidence of the change that takes place when a year is added to the days that are gone and a new year opens with its unstained pages.

At such a time people are wont to gather—the mirthful for rollicking pleasures and the

serious for prayer. The difference between the two groups is to some extent a matter of age. The young eagerly greet the days as they come, for all of life is before them. Opportunity is the great word that they see written in glowing letters on the dawn—opportunity to be improved. Hope, rather than memory, holds sway and their joy finds expression in youthful ways.

AN APPEAL FOR GUIDANCE

The older ones, in proportion to their age, recall opportunities unimproved, days wasted, and possibly, errors that have left deep scars. There is also a feeling of solicitude that misleading paths may be shunned and that the coming year may contain more to make retrospection satisfying.

While the gay make merry until the midnight hour calls forth a glad welcome to the new year, the sober, increasingly impressed with the finiteness of man and the infinite power and wisdom and love of God, look to the Heavenly Father as the only source from which enlightenment can come. They appeal for guidance during every waking moment of the coming year.

Experience has taught them how impossible it is to judge which moment will be richest in fruitage; they have learned how impossible it is to estimate the consequences of a single act. Trivial events sometimes become epoch making, while things seemingly great dwindle into insignificance. Happy are those who early learn their own need of prayer, and through prayer open their hearts to divine suggestion.

And New Year's Day is, more than any other day, the time for salutation and expressions of good will. It is a gloomy soul that does not respond on this day to the summons of friendship. If there is any warmth in the heart, it radiates in the greetings that are at their flood on New Year's Day.

ONE FUNDAMENTAL RESOLVE

Formerly John Barleycorn reaped his social harvest on the first day of the year. He offered his services as caterer to those who opened their homes to New Year guests and many a young man displayed a volubility that increased until it was lost in indistinctness, the number of his calls being limited only by his power of locomotion.

If the Eighteenth Amendment has lessened for some the attractions of New Year's Day, it has for a still larger multitude decreased the unpleasant reflections that come with the closing days of the year and made it possible for more families to face the future without fear.

It will be easier also to keep the new resolutions that this anniversary calls forth.

As it is impossible for any one to know all of the easily besetting sins against which old and young fortify themselves by resolution, I will not try to enumerate them or even suggest a partial list. Whatever these resolutions may be, they rest in part or in whole upon one fundamental resolve which includes all good resolves, viz.:

"God helping me, I shall so conserve all my powers of body and mind and so consecrate my life to purposes high and noble that I may render the maximum of service to my fellowmen and be content to draw from society a reward commensurate with the good I may be able to do."

If this introduction seems long, please remember that New Year's comes but once a year and that the offense cannot, therefore, be repeated for at least a twelvemonth.

WEALTH CANNOT INSURE WISDOM

Our Talks for the new year take us back to the Old Testament and we shall have an opportunity to trace God's methods of dealing with a "chosen people." We shall consider from week to week characters great and small, noble and ignoble, and learn how from the beginning it has been true that the "wages of sin is death." Nowhere except in the Bible do we find portrayed so vividly and so abundantly the just retributions that follow wrong doing; nowhere are the rewards of righteousness shown to be more swift and more sure.

We begin with Rehoboam, the only son of Solomon, and we wonder how one so wise could have a son so foolish—so far as known the sole contribution which he and a thousand wives and concubines made to the perpetuation of the race.

Rehoboam had all the advantages that a youth of his day could have. His father's reign was conspicuous because of its prosperity; wealth poured in upon his kingdom, and the heir-apparent had everything that the worldly-wise think necessary for a favorable environment. But the son taught the lesson so frequently repeated before and since, that neither a great