

The Religious Intelligencer

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. J. McLEOD.

VOL. XXXI.—No. 58.

SAINT JOHN, N. B. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1884.

(EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.)

WHOLE No. 1611.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON I.—Jan. 4.

(For Questions see Star-Quarterlies and Lesson Papers.)

PAUL AT TROAS.

SCRIPTURE LESSON.—Acts 20:1-16.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Paul at Troas. Acts 20:1-16.

W. Confronting the church. Acts 15:36-41.

T. Awaiting persecution. Matt. 10:16-24.

R. Assailing the dead. 2 Kings 4:32-37.

S. Christ raising the dead. Matt. 9:18-26.

Sc. Christ raising himself. Luke 24:25-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.—Acts 20:7.

TORONTO.—From Macedonia to Milnet.

The Sabbath at Troas.

TIME, A. D. 58.

TOPICAL TREATMENT.

Connecting Link.—Six months ago we left the

Apollonia at Ephesus, where a great disturbance

had been created by Demetrius and others, on

account of the falling off in the sale of silver shrines

images of the goddess Diana, caused by the

powerful preaching of Paul. Immediately after

that he visited Macedonia, and then went to Greece,

where we find him at the opening of this lesson.

He is still on his third missionary journey.

I. From Macedonia to Milnet. Paul probably

spent some ten months, after leaving

Ephesus, in visiting the churches and doing

missionary work in Macedonia, after which "he

came into Greece." He remained in that country

three months intending to sail, probably

from Cenchreae, the eastern port of Corinth, to

some port in Syria in order to go up to Jerusa-

lem to attend the Feast of Pentecost. In the

spring of the year 58 of the Christian era,

learning that the ever hostile Jews had again

formed a plot to waylay and probably murder

him, he changed this plan and went by land

through Macedonia around the head of the

Aegean Sea, into the province then called Asia,

and now known as Asia Minor. During this

trip he gathered a party of seven brethren to go

with him to the Feast at Jerusalem. Three of

them were from Macedonia and four from Asia.

They were to assemble at Troas and go on to

gether from that place. Just at this point in

the narrative, Luke, the writer, drops the use of

the pronouns "they" and "them," and again be-

gins to say "we" and "us," from which it is

inferred that he must have been some time at Philippi

(see chap. 16:11-17), and now rejoined

Paul and proceeded on his journey with him

and other disciples. Paul remained quietly with

Luk, at Philippi, during the Feast of the Pass-

over, after which they sailed away to meet the

other brethren at Troas. From that city to

Assos, across the "neck" of the cape was twenty

miles, and it was twice that distance around the

point. Paul, for some reason, chose to go ashore

across the neck, while the other brethren went

around with the vessel. Perhaps it allowed him

to stay longer at Troas, or to visit some

friend, or, as he says, to have a good quiet time

by himself on the island of Assos. It was

now occupied by a village named Heirani, and

the extensive ruins in the vicinity show that it

was once a place of considerable size. They

next stopped, perhaps for a night, at Mytilene,

the chief city on the island of Lesbos. It was

there, on the next day, that the beautiful scene

of the buildings and its excellent harbor. It was

the birth-place of Sappho and other persons noted

in the literature of that age. The city has con-

tinued to exist and enjoy a fair degree of pros-

perity until the present time. On the next day

they passed on to the island of Samos, where

they landed, and then to the island of Chios, now called So-

lomon, where they spent a night. On the follow-

ing day they ran down around the island of

Samos and put into Tragyllion, a town on

the main land, at the point of the promontory

of Mytilene. Near this place a famous battle was

CHRISTMAS DAY.

BY OLIVER E. DANA.

Again the Christmas anthems sound

Over all lands and seas;

Men hush their tumult and their strife

To hear the songs of peace.

The thought that thrills us thus

With deepest joy and sweetest peace,—

Is "Christ is come to us!"

He is our Lord and God to-day;

The centuries can take

Nothing of His dear presence hence;

Nor dim His advent make

As truly as if Syrian skies

Saw us before Him kneel,

The tender healing of His grace

Our trustful hearts may feel.

Yet not alone to give us joy,

He to our hearts has come;

Not that in gladness or in peace,

We sit, idle and dumb;

He came to minister, and those

Who in His love abide

Shall, in like ministerial love,

Press closer to His side.

His peace who gave Himself for us

Shall ne'er with us remain,

Till, following Him, we learn to do

His will, in joy and pain.

They are shut, in darkness, who

His spirit do not know;

His presence they shall feel,

Who on His errands go.

We tell anew that He is come;

Our hearts anew shall thrum;

At thought of Love whose warm, glad light

Shall fill our dim chambers still;

And even as love's e'er demands

The sole return of love,

We bring ourselves, in love, to own

His claim, all claims above.

A CHRISTMAS EVE AT BETHLEHEM

BY REV. THOMAS A. SNYDER.

Two days before Christmas we passed through

Bethlehem on our way to Hebron. The latter

is as closely associated with the beginnings of

the revelation of God's truth to a nation—a peculiar

people—as the former with the birth of Jesus

Christ—the coming of God in human form—the

Revelation to all the world.

The form of Abraham ever rises before the

mind when Hebron is mentioned and Hebron

and its history are forgotten by thousands who

look with profoundest veneration and love to

Bethlehem, where one greater than Abraham

was born, and where the world's Redeemer

was born. In entering Hebron we passed the large tree

known as Abraham's Oak—a very ancient one

twenty-three feet in circumference. It cannot

be as old as its name suggests by many, many

centuries, but it is the last of the family of Oaks

of Manne, under whose branches angels were

seen to dwell.

Hebron lies in "the Valley of Eshcol," rich

with vineyards, olive trees and fruits. The at-

traction of the whole place, however, is that

which but few Christians possess, and which

approach, and none to enter for these seven hun-

dred years past—the Cave of Machpelah. So

we hastened to look upon the walls which en-

close the mystery—the place universally ad-

mitted by Jews, Christians and Mussulmen to

be the sepulchre of the patriarchs.

The Hebrews, "the forbidden place," is a build-

ing of Jewish origin, standing high above all

else, the marked feature of Hebron. We hur-

ried up the steep way in an enthusiasm of

interest, in spite of the darkening faces of the

people and the protests of the guides, until fly-

ing from the summit we saw the city below. It

was the Hebrews, "the forbidden place," is a build-

ing of Jewish origin, standing high above all

else, the marked feature of Hebron. We hur-

thought under degrading and lowering associa-

tions. Just beside the shrine is shown the place

where stood the manger-cradle, at whose side

eastern wise men, once knelt in homage. Its

place is now supplied by a marble trough, and

tradition points to the real manger as being in

Rome, a belief which may well be questioned.

The whole ground and all the surroundings are

carefully measured off, each sect coming in for

a separate portion. The grotto itself is common

to all, though the Greeks hold the old Basilica

which covers the cave is theirs. This church was

erected by Helen, the mother of Constantine the

Great, in A. D. 327, and is therefore the oldest

Christian church in the world. It is divided

among the Greek, Armenian and Latin (Roman)

Catholics, each jealously watching for any en-

croachment of the other and ready to resist

even unto blood. The whole visit is saddened

by the presence of the Turkish guard, who are

there to keep the Christian fanatics from tear-

ing their way to the shrine above, and to

have their own approach to the shrine, which is

beneath. It is said that many bitter contests

have been waged for a few inches of wall, and

that the question of the opening and shutting of

the doors has well-nigh involved Europe in war.

But, in spite of all these drawbacks, one can-

not but absorb the spirit and enthusiasm of St.

Jerome, whose study is one of the precious pos-

sessions under the Latin control. Here that illustrious

saint and student lived and worked and died

showing in his consecrated life the power and

influence that came to men in the Divine Birth,

which consecrates the whole place.

The memories, the history, the sacred associa-

tions, lead one to forget the sad exhibition of hu-

man nature and religious bitterness which are

erected over the sacred spot. Such thoughts

are needed indeed. We attend the midnight

service at the Latin Church, which was a mere

travesty of Christian worship, utterly unworthy

of the church whose ceremonies can be made so

grand and impressive. It seemed so unfitting to

have a cracked voice organ playing airs from

Offenbach organs during the service in celebra-

tion of the Saviour's birth; but all else was

likewise sadly unimpaired, and the service

it was indeed an impressive moment—a privi-

lege to be there in Bethlehem, and to kneel on

the eve of Christmas at the shrine made sacred

by that Marvellous Gift.

It gave intense reality to the Gospel story in

all its homely, as well as its grandeur. The

new-born babe lay there in its swaddling

clothes, the first Christmas eve, but now a world

is moved by that power, and untold and mea-

sureless millions have knelt in homage and ad-

oration at His feet.

We went back to our camp singing carols and

hymns of Christian joy, and the little village