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International Sunday School Lesson.

FIRST QUARTER, 1880.

LESSON II.—JANUARY 11th.

BY REV. J. B. TAYLOR, Wilmington, N. C.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Mat. II: 13-23.

Commit to memory verses 16 to 20.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and thou shalt remain there until I bring thee word: for I will seek the young child to destroy him.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.

15. And there was until the death of Herod: that the child might be sought, but the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Lord, persecuted Joseph and all that were with him, until he came into the land of Syria: but when he was dead, Joseph returned into the land of Israel.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

18. And when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea, the country of his fathers, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.

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Reminiscences of a Long Missionary Life.

BY MATTHEW T. YATES, D. D.

Dear Recorder:

I deem no apology necessary for consenting to write a series of letters about myself and work, which must of necessity contain much of autobiography, for my sole aim in doing so is to promote the glory of God in the extension of Christ's kingdom among men of all nations.

In pursuance of this design, I shall take the liberty to pursue trains of thought that were suggested, at the time, by the various situations in which I have been placed, at home and abroad; and to allude freely upon whatever I may think will be of service to such as may be in similar situations in life, increase the efficiency of the churches of Christ, and promote the glory of God, to whom we are commanded to present our bodies a living sacrifice, which is our reasonable service. What I shall have to say of the incidents of my life before I sailed for China, in 1846, was written more than thirty years ago.

My parents—William and Delleah Yates—lived and died (my father in 1866 and my mother in 1867) in Wake county, North Carolina, 18 miles west of Raleigh. They were members of Mount Pisgah Baptist church, of which my father was a deacon from the time of my earliest recollections. They reared to maturity ten children, five sons and five daughters, all of whom made a profession of religion and joined the Baptist Church. I was the second child.

The neighborhood in which we lived was not celebrated for its wealth, refinement or educational facilities. It was, however, free from sinkings of vice and temptation to the young. The schools, in my school going days, were restricted to what were generally known as "old-field schools," probably so called because the houses in which they were held were generally situated in, or near, an "old field." The houses were rude structures—unbowed log huts—with split board roofs, a log chimney seven or eight feet broad at one end of the single room, for log fires; at the other end of the room there was a crack, formed by cutting away part of two logs, to admit light upon "the writing bench," and a door on one or both sides. The furniture of these school houses consisted of a chair, a look-up desk, a fernle and a long hickory article for the teacher, and long benches, without backs, for the school children. These "old-field schools" were generally in session only during the autumn and winter months. All that was taught in any to which I had the privilege of going, were spelling in Noah Webster's spelling book and Walker's dictionary, reading, writing after a copy set by the teacher, and Pike's arithmetic, to the double rule of three. No attempt was ever made to teach the meaning of words or anything else, except to find the answer to the sum given in the arithmetic, the whole work of which, when it was approved by the teacher, the pupil was required to copy in his "cipher-book."

My father delighted in keeping an open house for Baptist preachers, and in fact for preachers and religious men of all denominations, who chose to seek or accept his hospitality. Robert T. Daniel was the first preacher I remember, and about all that I remember of him is that he had a white head and a red face, and that he and my father seemed to love each other very much. A few years later I remember B. C. Howell, "Tom" Armstrong, and—Parefoy, father of Adison, George and James Parefoy. I remember well father Parefoy putting his hand on my head and saying, "May the Lord make a preacher of him." This blessing made an impression upon my young heart, for his manner was kind and his tone of voice serious. At some time subsequent to this, he asked me if I ever prayed to which I replied, "I did not know how to pray." He looked kindly at me, as I held his hand for him to mount, and said: "I will tell you, say 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" This short prayer has remained with me from that day to the present-time. It was the first intimation I ever had that I was a sinner. And "Tom" Armstrong's thundering exhortation to sinners—in which he was considered to be "every powerful," for his voice was like the roaring of a lion—kept before my mind by day and by night. I thought, however, that he was talking to the grown people, for he never talked to me at my father's house about my being a sinner. At a subsequent interview father Parefoy asked me, when there was no one else present, if I had prayed as he taught me. I replied, I did not know where to pray. And he said, "Go into the woods, where none but God can hear you. God is every where." That was my last interview and conversation with that man of God. He has gone to his reward, and his works do follow him. His was eminently a practical Christianity. His labors were not confined to the pulpit. I have ever felt that his words to me were words spoken in season. I was quite young, but what he said gave direction to my whole life.

I am persuaded that ministers of the gospel, parents and Christian parents, do not give sufficient attention to the religious training of

The children of their congregations.

I mean personal appeals to them to love and trust the Lord Jesus. They usually have a high respect and reverence for a minister, and, judging by my own experience, a solemn word spoken to a child of ten years, when there is no one present to distract attention, leaves a lasting impression—an impression that may ultimately be blessed to the salvation of the soul. It is what we learn in our youth that remains with us through life. Then why should not the youthful mind be guarded against the evils which beset the paths of the young by a knowledge of God's power and love in Jesus Christ, which will be given to all who love and obey him.

(To be Continued.)

G. WASHINGTON JONES STOPS WITH OLD BROTHER HOLDOUT.—HIS LIKE MAY BE FOUND AGAIN, &c. &c.

Dear Recorder:

I neglected to say that I am travelling on horse back, riding a nice sorrel pony that I have owned for some time, and with which I am closely identified. If my readers shall hear of the sorrel pony, they will remember that he is that pony that I rode to the mountains and there in the woods, in a narrow mountain hollow, in a snug cottage with many comforts and the beauties of nature about him, I have found old brother Asa Hold-out. He is advanced in life, but is still vigorous and full of vitality, and bids fair to attain a ripe old age. He thinks that he will be sure to go to heaven when he dies, and regards his good health and old age as a special mark that is one of the Lord's favorites. But some are mean enough to say he is spared to earth these many years because heaven wishes to be rid of him as long as possible, but I have no opinion in the premises and can only say that he is old and is very strange in some things.

Brother Hold-out, is rather small, with sharp features, blue eyes and though he is 65 years old, he has not a dozen white hairs in his head. He professed religion at the age of 21, was baptized into Mossy Hollow church, and continued a member for many years. He is not a member now but attends church and appears to have interest in church work. He would pray in public when called on, but was not forward. He declined to serve as a deacon because he said he knew that he was unworthy, and he says now that he knows that he was never called to preach. He has a nice family and is evidently proud of his wife and children.

He got out of the church in this way. Some 20 years ago he was a candidate for sheriff, and was very anxious to be elected. He canvassed the county very faithfully and at the election, his opponent defeated him by a large majority. He expected that all the brethren in his own church would vote for him, but five (5) of them could not see his fitness for the office, and they did not exactly vote against him by name—they voted for the other man. This gave him offence and he refused to support him. They thought that he was excited and would soon cool down and be the same. But they were mistaken. Bro. Asa Hold-out never cooled down when he once warms-up, and if he is crossed in his plans, he is certain to warm-up.

He talked about the bad treatment of his brethren to everybody far and near, and refused to attend all his meetings; and also refused to pay anything to the church unless these brethren would apologize to him and ask pardon! They felt no sorrow, made no confession and let him alone. Thus it drifted from bad to worse till the church took it in hand and sent a committee to say to him that he must attend church and bear his part of its expenses.

When the committee called on him, he was in a fiery mood, abused the church, the committee, the pastor, the brethren who voted against him and the man who beat him in the election. The committee reported his conduct to the church, but the brethren were unwilling to go hastily to extremes. It was decided to wait with him and win him if possible. The church sent to him to come to the next conference and lay his complaints before the church.

This was a fair proposition, but brother Asa Hold-out cared little for fairness when it ran against his violent impulses. It is his nature, creed and pride never to yield to man, church or wife. After several vain attempts to win him he sent word to turn him out and it was done. He now says that he was not expelled, but "quit of his own free will and accord."

Two of the five brethren had died and the others like himself, are growing in years and in grace also. I judge from what I say of them, he has never offered to return to the church. He now says that he is really glad that he was not elected, yet the treatment was the same—"It was an effort to keep him down."

I reached his house on Tuesday, p. m., and intended to leave early next day, but the rain detained me till Thursday. The rain gave him ample time to rehearse the whole matter and at the same time for me to impart to him some very safe and wise advice.

He always spoke with considerable

emphasis and never lost sight of his own purpose and interest. His ex-ample growth in grace, religious happiness, peace of mind, influence and usefulness, never seemed to enter into the question. It was usually "what I have decided to do for my own interest," &c. "They did me a great wrong, and they must repair it before I can fellowship or forgive them," &c. "The church was wrong," &c. It was a sad sight to see an old saint thus out of joint and on the verge of the grave and almost in heaven, with such spirits!

I remonstrated with him and urged him to bury it all forever. I referred to the death of those of them and to his own age, &c. "I am Asa Hold-out—he never yields to man, church nor wife," was his reply.

I spoke to him on the subject of forgiveness, and I got the concordance to find and show what the Bible teaches on the subject. He consented to hear what I could find in the Bible, for he as a Baptist had great respect for that book; but he thought that his mind was made up already. I read him among others the following passages: "For thou Lord art good and ready to forgive." Ps. 86: 5. This shows God's character and we who need forgiveness ought to exercise it to others. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Matt. 6: 12. (Also 14-6.) "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven." Luke 6: 37. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us." Eph. 4: 32. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Col. 3: 13.

He listened to these passages calmly but without any impression. I sought to impress it upon him that this was God's word and we ought to heed it. "Yes, yes, brother Jones, I understand all that better than you do—my mind is made up, for I am Asa Hold-out, and I never yield to man, church nor wife."

I said: "But yield to God and do what he says—forgive as his word directs. 'Ah! yes! I submit to God—am ready to do anything he says.' I urged him to exercise forgiveness towards those who had wronged him—that is what God commands in his word. 'Ah! brother Jones, those Scriptures have no bearing on my case at all—your Scriptures are good, but they do not suit me. The church ought to hear them and do with that, you would preach on that subject at Mossy Hollow church.' I said that he was Asa Hold-out and a pitiful man he was and I also saw that I could not move him even with the Bible before him."

I then referred to his children—what influence he was exerting on them, and that two of them were not Christians and quite wild. How could they ever respect much less desire the religion of Jesus which they saw it in him as only bitterness towards those who opposed him. "Yes, yes, they understand it and they have conscience in it," I told him that they were not Christians—they were far from it, and he here was that time fighting old battles that ought to have been forgotten 20 years ago. He had better look to his skirts, lest his blood be found on them in the day that they perish! He paused a moment and said with evident satisfaction, "Bro. Jones, it is not I but Mossy Hollow church, that stands in their way—that church will be called a fearful account if my children are in it and they are not Christians!" I said to him, "I am Asa Hold-out, I never yield to man, church nor wife."

His amiable old wife wept freely and said to him, "Asa you are wrong and brother Jones, is right—I tremble for my dear boys that are hastening to ruin and you are in their way of return." He gave her a smile of contempt and said, "Peggy, you know me well enough—why talk to me in that manner? my mind is made up! I am Asa Hold-out and I never yield to man, church nor wife. I know my heart, come Peggy it is well for you to weep, but I will weep over your own sins and not over mine."

I then appealed to him in behalf of his own feelings and happiness. I said how much better it would be to go back and tell the church that he was willing to forgive and be forgiven, and to make a part in the Lord's work. He said hesitatingly, "I am quite happy and feel that I am better and doing better than many in Mossy Hollow church. If my peace of mind depends on my going to the church and doing what you suggest, and seeking a place in that body, I will surely die without any peace of mind. When you will hear brother Jones, that I am Asa Hold-out and never yield to man, church nor wife!"

When I asked him, if he felt that he was not forgiven, and he readily replied, "Yes, if there is a converted person in this region, for I do not find any here better than I am—I would not swap places with any of them." When asked whether he believed that he exhibited the true Christian spirit, he answered, "Not as I ought perhaps, but I confess about as near to it as anybody in Mossy Hollow church." I could but feel how blinded he may become.

I informed him that I believed him wrong—sadly wrong and he

needed repentance. I closed by re-living an incident in the experience of a Presbyterian preacher, as told to me by himself. He began his minister in a town in the State of New York, as pastor of a small church. An old man was very regular, for a few Sundays and then stopped coming. He inquired about him and found that he was sick. He visited him and in conversation with him learned that his mind was very dark and his state very unsatisfactory. The preacher told the friend who directed him to him and the friend told him that he had had trouble with some man and could not forgive them—no wonder, he was in the town in the State of New York, and introduced the subject of personal troubles and spoke of their old influence on the heart and mind. The man frankly confessed that he was at variance with some, and told all about it. He urged him to forgive them as the Bible directed. He man promised to think about it.

The preacher made him the third visit, and asked him, if he had thought over that matter and was willing to forgive those men. "Well," said he, "I have thought it over and I have come to this conclusion. I will forgive all now but Clapper. I intend to wait till I get to the judgment day, and if God forgives him, so will I, and if God does not forgive him neither will I." I said to brother Hold-out, you seem to be waiting till the great day before you forgive.

We know how it will be with you and all like you then, for Jesus has told us, 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Matt. 6: 14, 15. And again, 'For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy,' James 2: 13.

It will be a terrible day to those who go there unforgiving in spirit, for God will never forgive them. Reader, is that likely to be your doom!

G. WASHINGTON JONES.

For the Recorder.

CHRISTMAS.

While the old and the young are thinking about the holidays, it may be interesting and beneficial to inquire into the origin and history of this festival.

The name Christmas is composed of two words, Christ and mass. The latter is derived from the phrase with which the early bishops distinguished their congregations: *He, missa et vocato, i. e., go, the assembly is dissolved.* The term *missa* (hence, *mass*) gradually came to be applied to the forms of worship, and later, by pre-eminence, to the celebration of the Eucharist. *Christmas* means, then, the special service in honor of Christ, performed at the supposed date of his nativity.

It is surprising that the disposition to commemorate the prominent facts of Christ's history overlooked for several centuries his advent. The observance of his birth may be traced in the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles; while the institution of the festival of Christmas barely antedates the middle of the fourth century. As late as the year 386 Chrysostom said at Antioch that it had first become known there less than ten years before. But it was introduced into the East from the West, where it first appears as a feast generally celebrated in the Roman church, under the bishop Liberius (352-366). Its institution is attributed by some to bishop Telesphorus (128-133). The time of the year fixed upon for its observance corresponded with the period of many pagan festivals. The Saturnalia were celebrated on the 16th or 17th of December. Next came the festival of the winter solstice; and after this, the Kalends of January, which festival was the principal one among the Romans. The 25th of December was determined as the date of Christ's birth by men appointed for this purpose by the Roman bishop Julius I. (337-352). Before this time the festival of the Nativity was observed, if at all, on the 6th of January. Neander says: "It is very probable that, in the Roman church, the date was settled by the authority of some historical tradition, founded upon apocryphal records."

Although the object of the feast was to call to mind the "star in the east," the choir of angels and the Babe of Bethlehem—from the first it was marked by "many of the follies and customs and practices which prevailed in the pagan festivals of the same season." Thankgiving and worship have always been subordinate to cessation from business, merrymaking and revelry. During the middle ages a prominent feature in the celebration was the rude dramas that aimed only at the fantastic and grotesque. The ceremonies were enlivened by the practice of carolling, accompanied with music and dancing, in which the staid bishop and clergy were in some degree dis-sipated after the fashion of the country, to appoint at the mansion a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of mischief," as he was variously called, whose term of office extended from the 31st of October to the 2nd of February, and whose duty it was to make the rarest pastimes to delight the eye of the beholder." The

larder was crowded with eatables; and there is an Italian proverb which testifies this fact: "He has more business than English ovens at Christmas."

"England was merry England when Old Christmas brought his sports along, and review before them what it has been Christmas told the merry tale; A Christmas gambol or would cheer A poor man's heart through all the year."

It was believed upon tradition that Christ was born about the middle of the night; and hence, the practice which prevails throughout Europe, of ringing all the bells at midnight, followed in Catholic churches by the mass, for which they are adorned with evergreens.

The Christmas tree seems to have been originally an institution of Germany and the north of Europe. It is there erected on Christmas eve, and is substantially the same as ours. There is this commendable difference, however: the tree being generally a house festival, the parents call together the members of the household, and review before them what it has been praiseworthy in each, as well as what has been displeasing, so uniting profit with pleasure. Christmas in England is not so boisterous as it once was, its principal features now being the making of presents, family reunions and evergreen decorations. This last practice is supposed to have been derived from the ancient druidical belief that the spirits of the wood found shelter in the evergreens till a milder season.

There are many superstitions connected with Christmas. Of them may be mentioned that one which affirms that at midnight all the cattle fall on their knees, yearly repeating the adoration of their predecessors in the stable at Bethlehem. Shakespeare refers to another, founded upon old tradition that ghosts for ake the earth, and "no witch hath power to charm" on the eve of Christmas.

"So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

It is said that the season is more generally observed in the Middle and Southern States than in New England. With us Christmas sometimes seems to be the feast of Bacchus rather than of Christ. Yet it brings much innocent amusement; old and young congregate to increase the sum of happiness; and domestic joys bubble up from a fresh fountain, which flows all the year. But the generous will remember the desolate homes which even Christmas cannot brighten, and the hearts that ache more sorely in the surrounding gladness which they cannot participate in.

W. L. POTRAT.

December 19, 1879.

[This article was unavoidably crowded out of our last issue.—Ed.]

For the Recorder.

WHO ARE DISCOURAGED?

I have often been impressed with the hopefulness of foreign missionaries in their work. In their letters from the field, in their speeches at our conventions, in their conversation at our firesides, there is a faith in the success of Foreign Missions so uniform, so firm, that I always wonder at it.

If there is any reason to despond, they are the persons to see it—to feel it. A large proportion of them are well educated