

DR. TALMAGE

Our Nation's Needs—We Should Show More Gratitude to God For His Blessings—Our Lack of Appreciation of the Land's Bounty.

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Our nation's needs are so many and so great that we should show more gratitude to God for His blessings. Our lack of appreciation of the land's bounty is a serious matter. We are a nation of materialists, and we are prone to forget the source of our wealth. We are a nation of consumers, and we are prone to forget the producers. We are a nation of selfishness, and we are prone to forget the needs of our fellow citizens. We are a nation of sinners, and we are prone to forget the mercy of our God. We are a nation of rebels, and we are prone to forget the love of our Father in Heaven. We are a nation of slaves, and we are prone to forget the freedom of our Lord. We are a nation of liars, and we are prone to forget the truth of our Bible. We are a nation of murderers, and we are prone to forget the blood of our Redeemer. We are a nation of thieves, and we are prone to forget the sweat of our labor. We are a nation of adulterers, and we are prone to forget the sanctity of our marriage. We are a nation of drunkards, and we are prone to forget the power of our God. We are a nation of gamblers, and we are prone to forget the value of our souls. We are a nation of idlers, and we are prone to forget the dignity of our work. We are a nation of sinners, and we are prone to forget the love of our Father in Heaven. We are a nation of rebels, and we are prone to forget the love of our Father in Heaven. We are a nation of slaves, and we are prone to forget the freedom of our Lord. We are a nation of liars, and we are prone to forget the truth of our Bible. We are a nation of murderers, and we are prone to forget the blood of our Redeemer. We are a nation of thieves, and we are prone to forget the sweat of our labor. We are a nation of adulterers, and we are prone to forget the sanctity of our marriage. We are a nation of drunkards, and we are prone to forget the power of our God. We are a nation of gamblers, and we are prone to forget the value of our souls. We are a nation of idlers, and we are prone to forget the dignity of our work.

SABBATH SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR DECEMBER 23.

Subject: Christmas Lesson, Matt. II, 1-11—Golden Text: II, Cor. IX, 15—Memory Verses: 4-6—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

1. "When Jesus was born." The date of the birth of Christ is uncertain, but the earliest accepted date is December 25, B. C. 5. He was born four years before the time from which we count His birth in our common reckoning. "In Bethlehem of Judaea." To distinguish it from Bethlehem in Galilee, mentioned in Joshua 19:15. "In the days of Herod, Herod the Great. He was an Edomite, and, although a proselyte to the Jewish religion, was notorious for his wickedness and cruelty. He reigned thirty-seven years in Judea, and died a few months after the birth of Christ. "Wise men." Or magi. Much learned and interesting discussion has arisen with respect to the "wise men" and the "star." Augustine and Chrysostom say there were twelve magi, but the common belief is that there were three. "From the East." Perhaps from Media or Persia, or, possibly, from Arabia.

2. "King of the Jews." There was at this time a general expectation throughout the East that one would be born in the East who should possess universal dominion. This was a title unknown in the earlier history of Israel and applied to no one except the Messiah. It reappears in the inscription over the cross. "His star." Many interpreters, especially those who seek to eliminate the supernatural, explain the "star," or "sidereal appearance," by a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which occurred in May, B. C. 7, and again in December with Mars added. It is, however, much more in harmony with all the facts to believe that the star which attracted the attention of the magi, was supernatural. "In the East." In the country east of Palestine, from whence they came. "To worship Him." God had influenced these wise men to take this journey to find and pay their homage to the Saviour.

3. "I had heard of thee." The magi had heard of the birth of the King, which immediately attracted the attention of the king. "Was troubled." Herod, now sunk into the jealous despondency of a man whose throne is on a volcano, was troubled. He was a man of a savage old age, was residing in his new palace on Zion, when, half-maddened as he was by the thought of the King, he was thrown into a fresh paroxysm of alarm and anxiety by the visit of these magi, bearing the strange intelligence that they had come to worship a new-born king. Herod feared a rival. "All Jerusalem." Herod feared that he would make this an occasion of renewing his acts of bloodshed.

4. "The chief priests." This expression probably comprehends the acting high priest and his deputy, "Scribes." The scribes were the learned interpreters of the Law, and the collectors of the traditions of the elders. Many of them were Pharisees. "Demanded of them." Because they would be most likely to know. "Where the Christ should be born." (R. V.) The wise men had said nothing about the Christ, or the Jews. But Herod said that this king must be the expected Messiah.

5. "By the prophet." Micah 5:2. Matthew does not quote the exact words found in Micah, but the sense is given. They did not need the Scriptures to search out the answer to Herod's question, for it was an accepted truth that the Messiah must come from Bethlehem.

6. "Thou Bethlehem." Bethlehem signifies the house of bread, the fittest place for Him to be born in whom is the true bread which came down from heaven. "Art in no wise least." (R. V.) Micah says, "Thou shalt be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." The prince of the thousands. "The tribe had been subdivided into thousands, and over each subdivision there was a chieftain or prince. "A governor." To control and rule. "Which shall be shepherd." (R. V.) To feed and care for, as a shepherd his flock.

7. "Privately called the wise men." He desired to keep the time of his birth as secret as possible lest the Jews, who hated him, should take occasion to rebel. A short time before this 6000 Pharisees had refused to take the oath of allegiance to him. "Inquired of them diligently." Learned of them carefully. (R. V.)

8. "He sent them." He assumed control, but they followed the directions of the Lord. "Search diligently." Herod was honest in making this charge to them; he greatly desired to receive definite word concerning the new king. "And worship Him also." What hypocrisy! He only wished to find out the child in order to murder it (vs. 13, 16); he was crafty and subtle, saying one thing and meaning another. But God did not permit him to carry out his purpose. "The star went down." In a dream, returned another way, and Joseph, warned in the same manner, took the young child and its mother and fled to Egypt.

9. "The star went before them." The same star which they had seen in their own country now appeared in the East, and had disappeared for a time, and this led them to inquire in Jerusalem for the young King whom they sought. Extraordinary helps are not to be expected where ordinary means are to be had, but now the star had traced its way into the East, and were at a loss what to do. But they believed God, and He who had led them thus far still continued to direct their steps. "Stood over." This should settle the matter that the star was supernatural. We will honor God by believing His word. The star pointed out the very house.

10. "They rejoiced." The Greek is very emphatic. They rejoiced exceedingly, because they saw they were about to find the child, and because they had such unmistakable proof. "Went into the house." "Into the house." They had left the stable that they were forced to temporarily occupy at the time of Christ's birth (Luke 2:7); and were living in a house. "They prostrated themselves before Him." According to the Eastern custom. "Gifts." The people of the East did not approach into the presence of kings without bringing them presents. The custom still prevails in many places. "Gold," etc. Gold would always be useful, while frankincense and myrrh were prized for their delicious fragrance.

11. "Even to-day the smart woman believes in her dressmaker, especially if she has a good dressmaker to believe in. But in these days she took all kinds of medicine, whether it suited her case or not, as far as dress was concerned. America changed all this. The freedom of expression, the education and courage of its women, and the great mercantile sense of its men soon insisted upon more practical forms for American consumption. The unnecessary, the tawdry, the meaningless were eliminated from dress so suddenly and ruthlessly as to astonish the entire manufacturing world. French things found few admirers and no safe. The style of Paris had to be practical, graceful, artistic, beautiful, attractive and suited to the occasion or it did not "go" here.

12. "Then, by and by, the French dressmaker began to learn a few things from his wealthy American customer who visited him in Paris. He found the American woman an attractive, graceful, magnificent creature, full of nerve, chic as any Frenchwoman, possessing natural grace and real personal beauty, as well as an independence of

THE ORIGIN OF STYLES

CAUSES THAT MAKE FOR AND AGAINST NEW FASHIONS.

How the New Modes Are Created—Influence of American Ideas and Demands Upon Parisian Productions—Inartistic Innovations No Longer Accepted.

Fashions and styles are never formed "out of thin air"; they are always brought into being from a definite cause or for a certain purpose.

Just why a mode is born is rarely thought of by the majority of producers and wearers, especially on this side of the water.

Some of the fashions of bygone days reached us in so concrete a form and were so directly related to the influences that gave them birth that their origin was unmistakable. In more recent days we have had to thank the French stage for the majority of new forms. Going back, we readily recall the advent of Lohengrin, of La Tosca, of Cleopatra, and of a variety of Bernhard ideas, reaching from hat to shoe and comprising every article of wear, including even accessories and jewelry.

The world had been satisfied for so many years to look to Paris and its cosmopolitan and high-pressure existence as the birthplace of all that was particularly interesting in art and style that the habit became second nature. Paris was regarded by the too enthusiastic and possibly not over-intelligent buyer of other countries, as well as America, as the only birthplace of style—the only centre where ideas of value took a concrete form. For many years the entire world accepted Parisian dictates, unpractical, grotesque even, as they sometimes were, without a murmur.

Thus the American buyer of former days, with an eager, consuming population behind him, ready to take even ridiculous merchandise at a profit, needed to know so little that he failed to make a study either of necessities or merits of style or merchandise. All that was necessary to insure a sale was an exhibition of the merchandise. So the question of style—real style and real taste—was an unimportant one, except with a limited portion of the population of our greater cities—people who really "knew a thing or two."

The tendency of such a period was entirely guided by the whim and fancy of foreign manufacturers, who founded their ideas upon historic precedents and traditions rather than upon necessity, progress and good judgment. There were always recurring periods for each class of merchandise. For instance, the whole world was eager during the days of the Second Empire to adopt anything French, and readily acceded to the undoubted supremacy of French fashion ideas.

The French taste of that period was decidedly erratic and anything but practical or artistic. But it was the only taste, the only authority of the day, Paris then being the centre of the world in dead earnest, the centre to which all eyes and minds turned as the source of all that was truly beautiful and inspired. The consequence was that the chignon, the hoopskirt or crinoline and other monstrosities were easily foisted upon an eager world, to the great profit of shrewd French manufacturers and dealers.

Then followed styles in which untold yards of goods were draped into the costume, simply to make a greater feast for French woolen and silk manufacturers.

The form or figure of the wearer was rarely considered in these matters. Women had little to say about the numerous disguises and freakish arrangements which were heaped upon them, and which only extreme grace and artistic sense permitted of being worn successfully, even in Paris itself.

Think of transplanting to America, with its then unpaved streets and peculiar conditions, styles contrived only for the acme of metropolitan existence. Yet every woman, poor and rich, from end to end of our broad States, had her chignon, and fat women waddled through the foot-deep mud of Western cities holding up their hoop skirts.

Then followed another era of idleness—the bustle and pad period. Great extensions in the back composed of wire with horse hair pads at the top, holding straight out voluminous draperies. This was the last quiver of dying slavery to fashion. Of course, women rebelled, men swore, and people of sense, born under American freedom, began to think and determine. Still, accustomed as they were to take fashion religiously, as a doctrine handed down to them by certain authorities at home and abroad, the idea of departing from the faith was regarded as little short of treason or heresy. No woman of twenty years ago would have thought of expressing her own opinion or suggesting the form of dress suited to her wants. She took fashion plates as if they were edicts. The dressmaker's advice was followed as closely and as carefully as that of the physician.

Duke Rebuked His Afternoon. The governments which make of London several cities within a city have been organized. The Duke of Norfolk, as Mayor of Westminster, presided over the city fathers who govern that section of the metropolis. A continuous raising and lowering of hands is necessary in electing committees, and some members flagged palpably.

"I wish," remarked the Duke Mayor sternly, "that some of you gentlemen wouldn't scratch your noses with the same hands you hold up for me to count."

Thereafter the city fathers went through their manual exercises with the smartness of guards at drill.—London Correspondence New York Sun.

A New Use For Bagpipes. A new use for the bagpipes has been found by a Scottish Highlander, who owns a sheep farm in a mountainous district of California, and is in the habit almost daily of playing his pipes all over the ground. The skirling has had the happy effect of scaring eagles out of the locality, in which birds of prey had formerly done considerable damage by carrying off lambs, and had even attacked towns when

LABOR WORLD.

The German Empire in 1890 had 1336 strikes.

A settlement of the woodworkers' strike in Chicago is said to be assured.

In Toledo, Ohio, all of the city departments are working under the eight hour rule.

Miners at the Simpson coal mines, at Lafayette, Col., have struck for higher wages.

The International Jewelry Workers' Union has organized a branch with 100 members at Philadelphia.

The Cigar Makers' International Union now has a membership of over 34,000 and is growing rapidly.

The servant girls of Minneapolis, Minn., are being organized into a union by the trades and labor council of the city.

The products of American work shops exported during the nine months ending September 30 last, were valued at \$538,678,243.

So great is the boom in the pattern-making branch of the iron-working industry that employes literally have had to hunt for workmen.

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