

## SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1880, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

## LESSON III.

JANUARY 13.]

JESUS BAPTIZED BY JOHN.—Matt. 3 : 1-17.  
[About A. D. 26, 27.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 13-17.

1. In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Ju-de-a.
2. And saying, Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
3. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet J-sa-as, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, I prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
4. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.
5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Ju-de-a, and all the region round about Jordan.
6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.
7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sad-uc-ees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance :
9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father : for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto A-bra-ham.
10. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.
12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.
13. Then cometh Jesus from Gal-i-lee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.
14. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?
15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.
16. And Je-sus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, and lighting upon him :
17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3 : 17.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

The divine witness to the "beloved Son."

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Nothing is known of Christ's life between the return from Egypt and His baptism by John except the one event of his visit to Jerusalem (A. D. 8 or 9; Luke 2 : 40-52) to celebrate the passover, and the attendant circumstances.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—With this lesson compare Mark 1 : 1-11; Luke 3 : 1-23; John 1 : 19-36. Study the relation and conduct of Jesus and John to each other.

NOTES.—JOHN THE BAPTIST, the divinely-foretold forerunner of the Messiah (Luke 1 : 11-17), son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, both of priestly families (Luke 1 : 5), living in Judea, probably at Hebron. (See Luke 2 : 39; Josh. 21 : 11, 13.) John was born six months before Jesus (A. D. 6), whose kinsman he was (Luke 1 : 3) : a Nazirite (Num. 6 : 1-21) from his birth (see Luke 1 : 15; Matt. 3 : 4), and a prophet and preacher of righteousness; beheaded by Herod Antipas (14 : 8-12) at the castle of Machærus, on the Dead Sea, A. D. 26 or 27. WILDERNESS OF JU-DE-A, "a dreary waste of rocky valleys" extending over the whole east part of Judea to the Dead Sea on the east, and the desert on the south: JE-RU-SA-LEM; the Holy City, an ancient town on the mountains, about 32 miles from the Mediterranean and 18 miles from the Jordan; made capital of the nation by David, whose son Solomon built the temple; finally destroyed as a Jewish city by Titus, A. D. 70; now in the hands of the Turks, with a population of about 20,000. In Christ's time it may have had from 30,000 to 45,000 inhabitants. JOR-DAN, the principal river of Palestine, flowing from north to south for about 200 miles till it empties into the Dead Sea. PHAR-I-SEES, the largest and most popular religious party of the Jews, professing superior piety and most rigorous observance of the law and tradition. SAD-DU-CEES, a smaller party, professing superior enlightenment, rejecting tradition, denying Providence, the resurrection and immortality. A-BRA-HAM, founder of the Jewish people. (See Gen. 11 : 27-25 : 8.)

## EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) JOHN THE BAPTIST, (II.) HIS PREACHING, (III.) BAPTISM OF JESUS.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST. (1-6.) THOSE DAYS (see 2 : 23; Luke 3 : 1, 2), while Jesus was yet at home in Nazareth, in A. D. 26, REPENT, turn from sin to God's righteousness (see Luke 3 : 10-14); KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, reign of Messiah (Dan. 2 : 44, 7 : 13, 14, 18), HE—i.e., John, ESAIAS, Isaiah (Isa. 40 : 3); MAKE STRAIGHT, even, clear of obstacles; SAME JOHN, John himself; RAIMENT (see Mark 1 : 6), a loose cloak of black, woven of camel's hair; LOINS, waist; MEAT, food. LOCUSTS, are still often eaten by the poorer classes in the East; JERUSALEM,

here means its citizens; ALL JUDEA, people from all parts of Judea; JORDAN, "region round about" means those parts east of the river, and north, as well as those of Judea—i.e., Perea, Samaria, Galilee, etc.

II. HIS PREACHING. (9-12.) ABRAHAM, as if being children of the covenant in the flesh would save them (see Rom. 9 : 6-8), AXE IS LAID, etc. (see John 15 : 2, 6), figurative : even now and from now God's judgment is in operation (John 3 : 18, 19); WITH WATER, in water, which is merely symbolical; UNTO REPENTANCE, which is only preparatory to the sanctification by the Holy Ghost; MIGHTIER, in authority and power; SHOES, sandals, TO BEAR (see Luke 3 : 16), as a slave after his master; WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE, in the Holy Ghost (see Acts 2 : 2-4); FAN, a kind of shovel to toss up the grain that the wind might blow away the chaff; FLOOR, a hard, beaten, circular space on Eastern fields, where the threshing was done; GARNER, granary, usually a dry vault under ground; CHAFF, dust and straw, all that was not wheat. It was often used for fuel.

III. BAPTISM OF JESUS. (13-17.) THEN, probably six months after the previous events, and at a different place (John 1 : 28), farther up the Jordan; HEAVENS OPENED UNTO HIM, in a vision, seen only by him and John (John 1 : 32); LIKE A DOVE, (see Luke 3 : 22). In the vision the Spirit appeared to them as having the form of a dove, symbol of gentleness, purity, and peace; BELOVED, only beloved, peculiarly beloved.

What in this lesson teaches—

1. The necessity of repentance before baptism?
2. The nature of true repentance?
3. The character of Christ's work?
4. The different states of righteousness and sin?

## LESSON IV.

JANUARY 25.]

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.—Matt. 4 : 1-11.

[About A. D. 26-27.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 1-4.

1. Then was Je-sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.
2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.
3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.
4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.
6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee : and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.
7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ;
9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
10. Then saith Je-sus unto him, Get thee hence, Sa-tan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.—Heb. 2 : 18.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ was tempted in all points as we are.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—The events of this lesson follow in immediate connection with those of the lesson on the baptism.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Study the three different kinds of temptation that Christ endured, and learn from him how to meet and overcome all temptation.

NOTES.—THE WILDERNESS. This was either the "Quarantania," a steep, barren mountain, wild and full of caves, west of the Jordan and near Jericho, or it may have been east of the Jordan, or possibly the desert of Sinai in the south. (See Ex. 31 : 28, 29; 1 Kings 19 : 8.) The former is more probable. THE DEVIL, adversary, accuser, Satan, the spiritual enemy of God and man, and chief of the fallen angels. It is not necessarily implied that he came in any visible form, but, as he does to us, in the spirit, suggesting evil thoughts in the mind. THE TEMPLE, at Jerusalem, first built by Solomon about B. C. 1005, afterward several times destroyed; rebuilt the last time in great splendor by Herod the Great as it was in Christ's time.

## EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE FIRST TEMPTATION, (II.) THE SECOND TEMPTATION, (III.) THE THIRD TEMPTATION.

I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION. (1-4.) THEN immediately after his baptism; LED UP (see Mark 1 : 12), impelled, not by his own will, but by the Holy Spirit; WILDERNESS, see Notes: TO BE TEMPTED, explains the purpose of his being brought there—to be tried and tested; FASTED, does not necessarily mean that he ate nothing, TEMPTER—i.e., Satan, who solicits to sin; HE SAID, suggested in his thoughts; COMMAND, speak; BREAD, to satisfy his hunger; IT IS WRITTEN (Deut. 8 : 3). EVERY WORD, "word" does not stand in the original. It means that man lives and is preserved by God's will, who can use any means he chooses, and is not limited to bread.

II. THE SECOND TEMPTATION. (5-7.) TAKEH HIM UP, in spirit; HOLY CITY, Jerusalem, called holy because it had the temple,

PINNACLE, literally, "wing;" also applied to a pointed roof. No particular part of the temple need be meant further than, perhaps, its highest point. Some think it meant Herod's porch; SAITH (see v. 3); IT IS WRITTEN (Ps. 91 : 11, 12); WRITTEN AGAIN, (Deut. 6 : 16); LORD THY GOD, in applying this to himself, Jesus clearly asserts his divinity.

III. THE THIRD TEMPTATION. (8-11.) EXCEEDING HIGH MOUNTAIN, this must again be by suggestion or in imagination, for no existing mountain could be high enough to give a view of "all the kingdoms of the world." No particular mountain need therefore be meant; ALL THE KINGDOMS, as in a vision (see Luke 4 : 5) : GLORY, riches, power, etc.; THESE KINGDOMS, kingdoms with their glory; WILL I GIVE, by this the tempter reveals himself as the "ruler of this world," but falsely so, and as an usurper; FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP, as an act of homage, token of subjection to him; GET THEE HENCE, "begone," an authoritative, imperative command; IT IS WRITTEN, (Deut. 6 : 13, 14), Jesus quotes it freely, not literally; LEAVETH HIM, for the time (see Luke 4 : 13); ANGELS, spiritual messengers of God (Heb. 1 : 14, Luke 22 : 43); MINISTERED UNTO HIM, perhaps with food, as they did to Elijah (1 Kings 19 : 5-7).

What in the lesson teaches us—

1. That Christ had a true human nature?
2. His divine strength?
3. How to overcome temptation?
4. That knowledge of Scripture can be abused?
5. The sin of presumption?
6. The sin of ambition?
7. The fatherly care of God?

The Scene of the Temptation.—A tradition, said to be no older than the time of the Crusades, fixes the scene of the temptation at a mountain to the east of Jericho, which from this circumstance has received the name of Quarantania. Naked and arid like a mountain of malediction, rising precipitously from a scorched and desert plain, and looking over the sluggish, bituminous waters of the Sodomitic sea, thus offering a sharp contrast to the smiling softness of the Mountain of Beattitudes and the limpid crystal of the Lake of Genesaret, imagination has seen in it a fit place to be the haunt of evil influences—a place where, in the language of the prophets, the owls dwell and the satyrs dance. And here Jesus, according to that graphic and pathetic touch of the second evangelist, "was with the wild beasts."—Farrar.

\*Farrar's statement is incorrect. Quarantania is nearly north-west from Jericho.—Ed. Hand-Book.

1879 AND 1880.

On Monday or Tuesday this number of the NORTHERN MESSENGER will be sent to press. The time of writing is the third of January 1880 and the returns of the previous year are just to hand. That they contain good news all our readers know, still they will be surprised to learn that during 1879 the receipts for subscriptions to the MESSENGER were \$2,786 more than in 1878 a clear gain of thirty-three per cent. and something over. But that is not the best of the news. A very large proportion of this gain was made in the last month and the indications are that it will continue to increase. If the increase of last month be continued throughout the year the MESSENGER would have more than ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND subscribers at the end of 1880; if the last year's increase be continued we will have SIXTY-FIVE THOUSAND subscribers at that time. Now which shall it be, the sixty-five or the one hundred thousand subscribers? In either case the circulation will be much larger than that of any other paper in Canada; but with the help of all our readers we might have the larger number as well as not. Very many of our friends have done nobly. Will not all do likewise?

## MORE LETTERS.

A FATHER'S COMMENTS.

DEAR SIR,—Enclosed please find \$2.40 for eight subscriptions to the NORTHERN MESSENGER for one year commencing with the new year. We have found the NORTHERN MESSENGER just the kind of paper to elevate and instruct both young and old. I take as much interest in it as the boys do, and they have been so pleased with it the past year that they got six new names.

JOHN WALKER.

Newfane, Niagara Co., Dec. 15th. 1879.

I think the NORTHERN MESSENGER an excellent paper; that it fills a place no other paper can, supplying a really useful and entertaining paper for boys and girls yet cheap enough for the million.

LA FAYETTE NORRIS.

A BIG BOY SPEAKS.

I am a boy twelve years old, but if you judge from my weight you will think me much older. I weigh 140 lbs. I read the

MESSENGER and when I get one read I am impatient to get the next. I tried to get some subscriptions for the MESSENGER but got three for the WEEKLY WITNESS which perhaps, will please you as well. Is not one WITNESS equal to two MESSENGERS. If so then, would I not make an ensign.

JOSEPHUS YOUREX.

Newcomb Mills, O.

Yes, and we have enrolled Josephus amongst the ensigns of our volunteer regiment.

DEAR SIR,—Enclosed you will find my list of new subscribers and renewals and the money for them. This will be three years I have taken your NORTHERN MESSENGER. I think it's just a splendid little paper for the money. I have got all the subscribers I could for you. If I get any more I will send them before New Year. I am nine years old and I always mean to take the NORTHERN MESSENGER.

HERMAN C. CLENDENEN.

Markham, O. Dec. 15th, 1879.

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I commenced to take the MESSENGER in 1876 and if I live I will take it until 1976.

HERBERT C. HOWE.

West Eaton N. Y.

## ABOUT PRIZES.

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L. McMILLAN.

Campbelltown, N. B.

The box of paints and Testament came in due time after date, I am very much pleased with my prizes. They are much nicer than I anticipated.

ROBBIE GARBUTT.

Wallacetown, O.

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