

sumptuous enough to entertain monarchs in; and right heartily he opened all his house to any who might choose to come to hear of Jesus. There was no public announcement, no advertising. These could not be allowed. The information was spread only by word of mouth; but many earnest souls seeking for truth came and were impressed, and the numbers steadily increased until he had to open all his rooms and get the assistance of friends, for generally as many as 1,000 to 1,500 people were assembled at these meetings for spiritual improvement. It was a strange sight, as one of the newspapers said, to see in the gilded saloons of Col. Pashkoff, the General, decorated by numerous honors, kneeling by the side of the peasant in his sheepskin, while some earnest Christian was offering up a petition which seemed to carry all hearts to heaven. That so many people could be found in so worldly a place as St. Petersburg to meet together for exposition of Scripture and prayer, is a sign that simple truth meets their deepest yearnings. Probably the very success of the movement, which was always jealously and suspiciously watched by the Church, caused its suppression. According to common rumour the suppression was craftily brought about in this manner. A report was circulated that somewhere, the people, animated by such teaching as Col. Pashkoff's, had entered a church and torn down the images. The Empress's Confessor was used as the instrument for putting that report in the proper ecclesiastical light before the highest authorities, and as the Empress lay then at the point of death, advantage was taken of the moment when the heart is tender, and the mind zealously affected toward religious subjects according to the measure of its knowledge; and so the order was given for Col. Pashkoff to leave the country, unless he would give up the good work in which he was so deeply interested. As a matter of fact the report was only a report, and the very utmost that could be made out, was, that some people had removed the images from their own private rooms because they felt no need for them. There is no law to prevent their doing this; but the end had been gained, and that was all that was required. And so for a time the workers have to rest from their activity that they may give themselves to prayer.

In all this good work Col. Pashkoff is heartily supported by his devoted wife; and their thoughts are not wholly limited to the spiritual benefit of their country, but they give much time and money to ameliorate the sad condition of the needy around them. Among their many benevolent undertakings they invite their friends to give one evening a week to make garments suitable for the necessities of those too poor to buy them, or, perhaps, to pay the full price, and many are the women and children who have been warmly clad by this means. The earnest and happy workers work with a will, and the cheerful meetings are brightened with earnest prayer that the good attempted, may be successful in its issue, for both Col. and Mrs. Pashkoff have a heartiness in their self-devoted work which makes their zeal infectious. To be with them, and to hear their plans, makes one wish to help them. There is no moodiness, no dullness in their religion, all is bright as day; and, as they carry out their daily work, many a wearied spirit is refreshed by the atmosphere of joy about them, and some, too, come to find the source of it in "the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding." It was cruel to remove so benevolent a family from their ministrations of usefulness; and it must be intensely trying for a patriot like Col. Pashkoff, with a patriot's zeal, intensified with Christian love, to know that his people are left in darkness and that no one may help them. In the terror of the present moment, the

Government is startled by anything which it cannot understand, or measure; and in its blindness, often strikes the good much more heavily than the evil worker. Happily these Christian brethren have studiously kept clear of everything that could in any way taint their proceedings with political partisanship. They are intensely loyal to the Crown, and devoted to the State. They have worked openly, and with all necessary permissions, their character is above suspicion. The blow has come from the strong hand and jealous spirit of the ecclesiastical authorities. — *World.*

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, Jan. 16.

THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS. — Luke 1:67-79.

GOLDEN TEXT. v. 78. — "The dayspring from on high hath visited us." Luke 1:78. To be learned, 76-79.

INTRODUCTION.

The time of the fulfilment of the promise to Zacharias and Elisabeth had come, the promised child was born, the eighth day—the day for the circumcising and naming of the child according to the Jewish custom—had arrived, and Zacharias, the name of his father, had been agreed upon as the name he should bear. But against this the mother had protested, insisting that his name should be John; and when the father was appealed to, he confirmed her decision by writing—for he was still unable to speak—"his name is John"—that is, he is already named John.

Thus the time specified by the angel for Zacharias to remain dumb had expired, all things spoken by the angel, even to the naming of the babe, were accomplished (see v. 20). Zacharias had shown his confidence in that divine message by confirming the name given by the angel, and immediately his dumbness departed, and he spake and praised God.

LESSON NOTES.

67. *Was filled with the Holy Ghost.* With the passing away of Zacharias' unbelief and its punishment, there came to him the great and overwhelming joy of conscious restoration to the Divine power, of which the Holy Spirit bore witness to his spirit by filling him with the joy of the Divine presence.

Prophesied. Spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—gave utterance, like the prophets of old (see 1 Pet. 1:10-12) to much that he did not at that time comprehend, but which was designed for others rather than himself.

68. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.* Zacharias' first impulse was to praise and bless God. The joy of the Spirit's presence uniformly voices itself in praise. *Of Israel.* Zacharias' conscious thought went no farther, probably, than his own nation; but the Spirit who spake through him meant much more. He meant God's spiritual Israel, that is, all who were, or should ever be, the children of God through faith (Rom. 9:6-8). *For He hath visited,* etc. He not only had visited them, in the past, but was about to visit them in a much higher and wider sense. This prophecy is, like that of Mary, both retrospective and foreseeing; and should teach us that Christ's coming in the flesh was not the *beginning* of His redemptive work, but rather the ushering in of another phase of the one work which had been in progress since the day of man's first sin.

69. *Hath raised up an horn of salvation.* The word *horn* is used metaphorically for power, or strength; and is borrowed from those animals whose defensive power is in their horns. The reference is to Christ, and the expression, *a horn,* etc., might be rendered "a strength of salvation"—meaning, of course, *one able to save.* *In the house of his servant David.* As Mary, the mother of our Lord, was still unmarried, we have here direct proof—if other proof were wanting—that she was of the royal line of David; and that our Lord's descent from David was not nominal, but real.

78. *As he spake, &c., since the world began,*—or, from the earliest times. The prophecies concerning Christ either shadowed forth in sacrifices and types, or uttered in words by inspired men, date back to the days of Adam and Eve; but those particular ones which showed that he was to be of the lineage of David, are of a later date. Probably it is of Christ as a

Saviour (horn of salvation) that those words are to be understood.

71-75. *That*—in order that. This conjunction grammatically refers to *raised up* in v. 69, v. 70 being merely parenthetical; and the language may be transposed thus:—*and hath raised up, in order that we should be saved, an horn, &c.*

The object, then, of Christ's being raised up was SALVATION. Here, again, Zacharias' conscious thought evidently goes no farther than his own nation, as we see in the expressions—*saved from our enemies,*—*mercy promised to our fathers,*—*holy covenant,*—*the oath which he swore to our father, Abraham.* But all those expressions, when studied in the stronger light which the Gospel sheds upon them, disclose a deeper meaning than Zacharias seems to have perceived; for God's covenant with Abraham, which covers the whole ground, is to Abraham and his seed, which seed, the Apostle Paul declares, is CHRIST—(Gal. 3:13-18). Here, then, we have in brief, the great ends God had in view in the gift of Christ; namely—the saving of His people from all their enemies;—the fulfilment of His promise as embodied in the Abrahamic covenant;—the fearless service of His people;—the character of that service,—*in holiness and righteousness,*—the duration of that service,—*all the days of our life.*

76. *And thou, child, Zacharias now turns from a general survey of the blessings that were to follow from Redemption, to address his child. Shall be called the prophet of the Highest*—(Matt. 11:9-11; 21:26). *Go before the face of the Lord*—*"the Most High"*—to prepare, &c., (Is. 40:3; Mat. 3:11).

77. 78. *To give knowledge of salvation, &c.*—or, to inform men—instruct them in regard to salvation—by ("in") the remission of sins. Salvation is by Christ, in the remission of sins, *through the tender mercy of God, whereby, (by which) the dayspring from on high—Jesus, the spring, or source of all spiritual day—hath visited us.*

79. *Hath visited us, for what purpose? To give light*—(John 1:4-9) *to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*—words awfully expressive of the natural condition of all men—to *guide our feet into the way of peace*—of submission and consecrated service—(John 14:27). Zacharias addressed himself to his child, but it was only a glance; for his eye wandered quickly away from the herald star to the RISING SUN, in whose beams the lesser light (Mark 1:7) was to be—not quenched, but lost sight of in the greater glory of His beams (John 3:28-31).

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

It was customary in Eastern lands, when a king was about to make a progress through his dominions, to send a herald in advance to proclaim his coming, and call upon his subjects to prepare his way before him. Such was John's mission. He was the herald of the King of glory, and the preparing of His way was the work wrought in men's hearts, and not in the highways of Judea.

John was no princely herald, with a long train of obedient slaves; he was a lowly prophet, alone and unattended, coarsely clad and poorly fed, and yet no such herald ever preceded any earthly king.

Men's utterances, under the prompting of the Holy Ghost, have a depth of meaning of which we have very little comprehension. In these few sentences spoken by a humble Jewish priest, are uttered or suggested material for more books than have ever yet been written on other themes, and the subject, even had all these been written, would still be but very partially unfolded. Eternity will not exhaust it.

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(FOR THE CHILDREN.)

What had God given to Zacharias and Elisabeth? What did the people want to name him? What did his mother want him to be called? What name did his father write? Why did he say *his name is John*? What too? Place as soon as he had written that? (see v. 64.) (67). Who came at once and filled Zacharias' heart? What did Zacharias do? What is it to prophesy? It is to speak out the words God's Spirit gives men to say. (68). Whom did Zacharias bless? What did he bless God for? (69). What did he say God had raised up? What did he mean by *a horn of salvation*? He meant a *strong Saviour*. Who was that strong Saviour? It was Jesus who was soon to be born into this world. What is meant by *in the house of David*? In, or of, David's family. (70). Who had told about this Saviour? How long had they

been telling of Him? (71-73). What was the Saviour coming to do? (74). What was He going to grant to His people? (75). How were His people going to serve Him? For how long? (76). Whom did Zacharias speak to when he said *thou child*? Could the baby understand him? No, for he was only eight days old, but Zacharias was speaking as a prophet of what was going to be. Did John grow up to be a prophet? Whose prophet? Was he a very great prophet? (See Matt. 11:9-11.) (77). What would he give the people by his preaching? (78). Who is meant by *the dayspring from on high*? (79). What did Jesus, the dayspring, come to give? Is there no *peace* except in loving and serving Jesus? What does Jesus say to them that love Him? (See John 14:27). Will you not come and give your heart fully to Jesus, that that *peace* may fill your hearts?

A REMARKABLE INCIDENT.

A remarkable and curious fact, perfectly authentic, has recently been brought to my knowledge. Names and places are, of course, suppressed, as the parties directly interested would shrink from any publicity.

The son of a widowed mother grew up to be a promising, brilliant, but reckless, young man. That is to say, he was talented, popular, and successful, as the world goes, but was unrestrained by any regard to moral principle. He was gay, dashing, and ready for anything in the way of the wildest frolics. Thoughtful friends could not fail to see that the conclusion of all this was almost certain to be a brief career, closing in dissipation and a hopeless end.

For several years this course was run, and his reputation as an exceedingly clever but "fast" young fellow had come to be well established. All this time his mother's prayers had gone up with unceasing importunity before the throne of God. There they were, a mighty host, pleading for the deliverance and salvation of her son.

One day, the young man walked into the noon prayer-meeting of the city where he lived and was well known. There had been nothing, up to that moment, to indicate any change in his course, and his presence was a matter of curious wonder. At last he rose, and all eyes were turned upon him. He alluded to his past life, which he said he was well aware was perfectly familiar to them all. He stated that he had had enough of it. He had pondered it all within the preceding twenty-four hours, and had determined to face squarely about. Henceforth he proposed to cast in his lot on the Lord's side. He had come to the conclusion, deliberately, and now he wanted the prayers of all, that he might be aided in carrying out his new-born determination.

It may well be imagined what an effect was produced upon that meeting by this frank and manly avowal of one whose course had been so unpromising up to that moment.

But now comes the remarkable part of this narration. His mother was in another city, miles away. As she sat down at the dinner table *that very hour*, she remarked: "I have no longer any concern about —. I do not know whether he is converted, and so my prayers are answered, or whether he is irrevocably doomed to be lost from this time forth, so that I cannot do anything to save him. I only know the load on my heart which I have carried so long is all gone, and I am at perfect rest."

The story I have told is strictly true. Do we get a glimpse in it of "ministering spirits," sent unto "the heirs of salvation," and catch a hint of one of the offices which they sometimes perform?—*Congregationalist.*

THE MOTHER.

The mother's life is full of prose
From early dawn to daylight's close,
But oft amid her household cares,
Some little poem unawares
Is written down within her heart,
And of her life becomes a part.

Some loving words a child may say,
A golden curl long put away,
A half-worn shoe upon the floor,
An outgrown dress the baby wore,
A broken toy or faded flower,
May touch the heart-string any hour.