

mould, it is left for a while that it may take shape. But the first few moments are the most important; for then the surface of the great iron globe, which comes into contact with the damp sand of the mould, is cooled, and the shape is set. The time after that serves to harden the metal, not to change its form. Life in this world is the mould in which our souls are shaped for eternity; and the first years after we have begun to think for ourselves, to feel the pressure of right and wrong, to determine duty or indulgence—these first years have more to do with the making of us than the rest.

Have you been in the Adirondack woods hunting and fishing? If so, you remember that your guide, when he came to the rapids in the stream, did not dash carelessly down it. He stopped the cranky little craft, balanced the boat, got a sure grip on his paddle, then let her drift slowly toward the centre of the narrow sluice until the skiff's nose was in smooth water which shows that there it is deepest. Then, with eye, and nerve and muscle all working together, he kept her head on, just so, and you shot down the rock-strewn stream as swiftly as a water-snake. Ask your guide why he was so careful at the beginning, and he will tell you that if he starts the boat right he can keep her right; but the twisting waters would be too much for him if he did not have her safely in hand at the word "go!"

Boys and girls, entering your teens, you are at the head of life's rapids. Your craft is already catching the drift of strong desires, ambitions, passions. You feel them. They almost frighten you sometimes. Have no anxiety except to aim at the very centre of what is right, at the purposes which are deepest and purest. Knit the nerves of your strongest resolution. Vow to yourself, and to God who will help you. Then away down life's stream! It will be exhilarating, grand; all true life is. But take care! For your soul's sake, don't drift in among the rocks and whirlpools without the grip.—James M. Ludlow, D. D.

TRUST NOT MISPLACED.

BY REV. J. H. M'COLLAGH.

During the commercial panic of 1837 there lived in the city of W—ton an earnest Christian worker. He had a large family, but was not rich in this world's goods. The denomination of which he was a member had for several years been struggling to complete their house of worship. He being an example unto the brethren, had made large contributions, and ere he was aware had given several thousand dollars to finish the church. Clouds of business depression were now gathering thick, and the storm of ruin was ready to break forth. About this time he bought and shipped a valuable cargo to a wealthy gentleman in New York. Several weeks after he was surprised by the cashier of the bank hastily entering the place of business, saying in an excited manner: "Sir! that New York man has failed and the draft for the cargo has been returned, protested. Things are growing darker all the time, no one can tell what the end may be." The cashier was astonished to see how self-possessed he remained. He forgot that it had been written of the upright man, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." But it was a great blow to him. What could be done? The draft was for thousands of dollars. The bank could grant no favors, and was bound to have the money. Collections were out of the question. Real estate would not bring one-fourth of its value. Ruin stared him in the face. There was no escape. It took a firm eye and a brave heart to stand in his home among his little ones and see the grim spectres of poverty and want overshadowing them.

Thirty days of grace were granted, but they were days of torture and almost despair. His refuge was in prayer. The last day came. The family were assembled as usual at the Throne of Grace. He poured out his soul unto God. As Hezekiah of old spread out the letter of the wicked King of Babylon before the Lord, and prayed over it, so did he state his case to the Almighty. He arose comforted. Resignation had come. Yes, I can be poor. Yes, I can walk where God leads me. Yes, I can go to the bank to-day and make myself a pauper, sign away house, home and all. God is still mine, my family are still mine, the promises in God's Word are not changed, heaven shall be mine. I trust God for the future.

He dressed carefully so as to go through

his sad duties decently, and sat down to wait until the bank opened. While sitting there three letters were brought in. He opened the first. Could his eyes deceive him? It contained a draft for \$1,000, sent by a brother in New England. The next letter was from a New York bank, authorizing him to draw on it for any amount sufficient to tide him over his difficulties. The third letter was from the man to whom the cargo had been sent, telling him to draw again for the full amount and the draft would be honored. The tears of thanksgiving streamed down his cheeks. "Now do I know that there is a God in Israel; I was brought low and he helped me."

When he reached the bank the directors were in session discussing his case. They arose and entered. The president, taking his hand, said: "Sir, we feel very sorry for you in your great misfortune, you have our deepest sympathy. We only wish we could help you."

"Gentlemen," he replied, "I am very much obliged to you for your kindness and sympathy. But I am all right," and forthwith cast the drafts on the table. Then there were hearty hand-shakings and congratulations. That which, according to human eyesight, came so near being his ruin gave him henceforth unbounded credit and laid the foundation of a large fortune.

I saw him when I was in W—ton last winter on my Sabbath-school work. He was strong, active, cheerful at the age of eighty-four, increased in goods, full of years, still trusting in God, waiting like Abraham to be gathered unto his people. "Trust in the Lord and do good, and he shall bring it to pass."—N. Y. Observer.

FANNY AND THE CHILDREN.

BY MRS. R. OF LOWELL.

Our Fanny is a fine, intelligent mare of the famous Morgan breed, very spirited and nervous, never liking to have anything approach her hind legs. In fact, would kick, if anything annoyed her ladyship.

One summer's day, the stable man rushed into the house with scared face, saying he had found, on entering the stable, two children, our little girl and her boy cousin, both five years old, standing in the stall. One had a blacking brush, which she dipped occasionally into a pail of water, washing the sides and legs of the animal as far as her tiny hands could reach.

The boy was industriously combing out Fanny's long, black tail, tugging away with an old curry-comb he had picked up in the stable. Both standing near the horse's heels, while Fanny was as quiet as a lamb, in spite of the harsh treatment she was receiving. She did not even raise her hind feet to drive away the flies that were annoying her, lest she should harm the children. She certainly would never have permitted an older person to treat her so roughly.—Our Dumb Animals.

HOME.

A child, speaking of his home to a friend, was asked, "Where is your home?" Looking with loving eyes at his mother, he replied, "Where mother is."

THREE TOBACCO USERS.—The *Christian at Work* says that "only three animated beings use tobacco—a noisome and poisonous worm that lives on the plant, the wild gnat which feeds on its leaves, and the human beings, who chew, snuff, and smoke it."

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON I.—APRIL 4.

THE WORD MADE FLESH.—John 1: 1-18.

COMMIT VERSES 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.—John 1: 14.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Our Saviour is both God and man.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 1: 1-18.
T. Isa. 9: 1-7.
W. Phil. 2: 1-11.
Th. Heb. 1: 1-14.
F. Matt. 1: 17-25.
Sa. Matt. 2: 1-23.
Su. Luke 2: 1-19.

JOHN THE APOSTLE.—(1) Born at Bethsaida, in Galilee. (2) His parents were Zebedee and Salome. (3) He was born probably between A.D. 1 and 6, the youngest of the Apostles. (4) RELATIVES. His mother was probably the sister of the Virgin Mary (compare Matt. 27: 56 with John 19: 25), hence he was first cousin

of Jesus, and a more distant cousin of John the Baptist. He had a brother, James. (5) He was brought up to his father's business of fishing in the sea of Galilee. (6) It is probable that he never married. (7) He was a disciple of John, and one of the earliest and most intimate disciples of Jesus. (8) John probably remained in Palestine till after the destruction of Jerusalem; then he went to Ephesus, was banished to the Isle of Patmos by Nero, returned to Ephesus, A.D. 96-7, and died there about A.D. 98, aged 80 to 95. (9) WRITINGS. The Gospel, A.D. 80-90. Three epistles, and the Book of Revelation, A.D. 90-98.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.—1. AUTHOR: John. 2. LANGUAGE: Greek. 3. DATE OF WRITING: A. D. 80-90. 4. PLACE OF WRITING: probably Ephesus. 5. SOURCES: It was probably the record of his preaching about Jesus.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

I. THE WORD: the divine Jesus, who became man (v. 14). He was called the WORD because he reveals to us the thoughts and feelings of God, as our words reveal our thoughts. WITH GOD: distinct from God, and yet, God himself. 4. THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN: by giving spiritual life, he enables us to see spiritual things. Dead things cannot see. As a living person, he teaches, he gives us an example. 5. DARKNESS: of sin and ignorance. COMPROMISED: did not receive it and thereby become light. 11. HIS OWN: especially the Jews. 12. SONS: children. 13. NOT OF BLOOD: not by natural descent. We are not God's children because our parents are. NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH: not by our natural wills. We cannot make ourselves the children of God. NOR BY THE WILL OF MAN: nor can others make us so. 14. MADE FLESH: became man. FLESH includes our whole human nature, body and soul. GRACE: God's favor freely given; and hence the blessed and joyous gifts of that love, especially spiritual gifts. 16. GRACE FOR GRACE: Grace added to grace, grace the means of further grace; a grace in us corresponding to each grace in him. 18. SEEN GOD: his full brightness, his perfect character and plans. They had seen only hints revealed to them. HE HATH DECLARED HIM: Jesus shows us what God is, so that now we have seen more of God.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Give a brief history of the apostle John. What books of the Bible did he write? Tell what you can about the Gospel according to John.

SUBJECT: OUR DIVINE SAVIOUR.

I. WHO HE WAS (vs. 1-3).—Who was the Word? Why is he so called? What proofs do you find in these verses of the divinity of Christ? What else do you learn about him? What advantages to us in having a divine Saviour?

If Jesus Christ made the world, can there be any conflict between true science and the Bible? How does the fact that he made the world make the study of nature more interesting and more helpful?

II. WHAT HE DOES FOR MAN (vs. 4, 9, 14).—What two things Christ does for us are mentioned in v. 4? What kind of life is given by him? (Eph. 2: 1-7; 1 John 5: 11-13.) What is meant by light? Where does the light shine? What is meant by darkness? What light did Christ bring to us? For whom is it meant? Who bore witness to this light?

Are there many things we need to know which we could not find out by ourselves? What are some of them? How has the Gospel been proved to be the light for every man? Is this a proof that it is true?

III. SOME REJECT HIM (vs. 10, 11).—Who is meant by the world? Under what obligation were they to receive Christ? How did they treat Him? Who are meant by "His own"? Under what special obligations were they to Him? (Isa. 5: 1-4; Deut. 32: 1-16.) Is rejecting Christ mean as well as wicked?

IV. WHAT HE DOES FOR THOSE WHO RECEIVE HIM (vs. 12-18).—What did he do for those who received Him? What are some of the privileges of being children of God? (Rom. 8: 14-17.) How can we become children of God? What is meant by "the Word was made flesh"? Of what was he full? What is grace? What have we received from him? How does Jesus reveal God to us? What reasons do you find in this lesson for loving and trusting Jesus?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. God's great love to us in sending a divine Saviour.

II. How great must be the evil and danger of sin to require such a Saviour.

III. Since the same Jesus made the world and brought the Gospel, they must be in harmony.

IV. Our four great needs,—life, light, grace, truth.

V. Sin is not only wicked, but mean.

VI. The great privileges of the children of God,—they are heirs of His love, His care, His character, His home.

VII. We become His children by faith in Jesus, and regeneration by the Spirit of God.

LESSON II.—APRIL 11.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES.—John 1: 35-51.

COMMIT VERSES 40-42.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.—John 1: 37.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Blessed are they who go to Jesus and invite others to go with them.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 1: 19-34.
T. John 1: 35-51.
W. Matt. 3: 1-17.
Th. Mark 1: 1-15.
F. Luke 2: 38-52.
Sa. Luke 3: 1-18.
Su. Luke 4: 1-15.

TIME.—February, A.D. 27, on a Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath) and the day following. It was 42 or 43 days after the baptism of Jesus, and was the beginning of his ministry.

PLACE.—Bethany (Bethabara) and the way

between that place and Cana of Galilee. Bethany ("boat-house") is the probable reading; instead of Bethabara ("ford-house," or "ferry-house"). But they were probably neighboring villages or districts, and the baptizing of John may have been in both. The place was probably one of the fords of the Jordan opposite Jericho. It was a highway of travel.

RULERS.—Tiberius: Caesar, emperor of Rome (15th year from his association with Augustus, 18th as sole ruler, Luke 3: 1). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (2d year). Herod Antipas, of Galilee (31st year).

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.—The Roman empire extended over most of the known world. Greece, subject to Rome, but a leader in literature and schools. Greek, the almost universal language among the educated. Strabo, the Greek geographer (B.C. 51-A.D. 24), Ovid (B.C. 43-A.D. 18), Livy (B.C. 59-A.D. 17), and Seneca (who died A.D. 65) were all living during the life of Christ.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—John omits all the early life of Jesus and of the Baptist, the ministry in the wilderness, the baptism of Jesus, and his 40 days' temptation recorded in Matt. 1: 1 to 4: 11; Mark 1: 1-13; Luke 1: 1 to 3: 18; 3: 21 to 4: 13.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—John had been preaching and baptizing for more than six months (July, A.D. 26-Feb., A.D. 27), and such multitudes came to hear him, and the excitement about him was so intense, that the leading Pharisees in Jerusalem sent a deputation to him at Bethany (Bethabara) beyond Jordan, to inquire what he really pretended to be. The day after his answer to the Pharisees, he sees Jesus coming towards him, and he points him out to his hearers, as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, i.e. the expected Messiah, and declares how he recognized him. Our lesson begins on the next day.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

35. TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES: one was Andrew (v. 40), and the other was doubtless the apostle John himself. 36. THE LAMB OF GOD: i.e., the one to whom the lamb of the daily sacrifice and of the Passover had been pointing for 1,500 years. 38. RABBI: the Hebrew word for master or teacher, and therefore not familiar to the Gentile Christians. It was interpreted into Greek. 39. THE TENTH HOUR: four o'clock p.m. according to the Jewish reckoning, but 10 o'clock a.m. by the Roman reckoning. The latter is the most probable. 42. CEPHAS: a Hebrew word translated into the Greek word Peter, both meaning a stone or rock. 44. BETHSaida: a town on both sides of the Jordan where it enters the Sea of Galilee. 45. NATHANIEL: probably the apostle called elsewhere Bartholomew. MOSES DID WRITE: in the Pentateuch. See Gen. 40: 10; Num. 24: 17-19; Deut. 18: 15. AND THE PROPHETS: Isaiah (9: 6, 7; 52: 13-15; 53: 1-12), Ezekiel (34: 23-31), Daniel (9: 24-27). 48. UNDER THE FIG TREE: probably far off in his own garden at Cana, where he had been accustomed to retire for meditation and prayer. I SAW THEE: there were two wonders,—that Jesus saw him many miles away beyond natural sight, and that he saw his inmost thoughts and feelings. 51. YE SHALL SEE HEAVEN OPEN, etc.: (1) such manifestations as Matt. 4: 11; Luke 2: 13: 9: 29-31; 22: 43, or (2) that through Jesus we can go to heaven, and our prayers and desires can reach heaven, and God will send His light, truth, Holy Spirit, and every needed help down from heaven, the allusion being to the ladder in Jacob's dream.

LEARN TO HEART John 1: 29, 30, 32-39.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where was John preaching and baptizing at this time? What time of the year was it? How long had John been baptizing? Had John seen Jesus before this? What had he done for him? (Matt. 3: 13-15.) Where had Jesus been since then? (Matt. 4: 1-2.) What had taken place the two days previous to this lesson?

SUBJECT: GOING TO JESUS.

I. JOHN BEARING WITNESS TO JESUS (vs. 35, 36).—Where was John? What was he doing? What was the object of his preaching? Who were with him at this time? Whom did they see? What did John say about him? (v. 29.) What did he mean by the Lamb of God? (Lev. 4: 32-35; Ex. 12: 21-27 and 29: 35.) How does Jesus fulfil these sacrifices? In what sense does he take away the sin of the world?

II. GOING TO JESUS (vs. 37-40).—Who were the first two disciples of Jesus? What did they say in reply to his question? Where did they go with him? Was this his home? How long was their visit with him? What is it for us to go to Jesus?

III. LEADING OTHERS TO JESUS (vs. 41-46).—What was their first desire after they had found Jesus themselves? What was the name of Andrew's brother? To what did Jesus change it? Why? Who was next called? Whom did he bring to Jesus? What objection did Nathanael make? How was it answered? Is to come and see the true way to learn the truth about religion? Why ought we to bring others to Jesus? In what ways can we best do it?

IV. THE BLESSINGS OF GOING TO JESUS (vs. 47-51).—What kind of a man was Nathanael? Are such the ones most likely to come to Jesus? What marvellous knowledge did Jesus show? What effect did this have on Nathanael? How many titles are applied to Jesus in this lesson? Show how each one belongs to him. What more did Jesus promise him? What does this teach us as to the way to obtain larger spiritual blessings? What is meant by the promise in v. 51?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. To come to Jesus as our teacher and master is to become a Christian.

II. One great proof that we are real Christians is the desire to bring others to Christ.

III. Mark the value of personal work for Christ.

IV. Unfounded prejudice often keeps men from believing in Christ.

V. Christ gives more and greater gifts to believers.

VI. Jesus Christ is described by many titles, to teach us that he is a Saviour for all men, for all needs, and in all circumstances.

VII. Through Jesus communication is opened between us and heaven.