

The Babe and the King.

DECEMBER 25.

ISAIAH IX: 6, 7.

Golden Text, John 1: 45.

IN THE previous chapter Isaiah had shewn the dark side of the picture—the trouble and anguish that should overtake those who forsake God, ch. 8: 22. In this, he points to a brighter time coming, when the Sun of righteousness should enlighten the world and finally usher in the universal reign of peace and happiness. These verses contain one of many Messianic Old Testament prophecies. We may recall a few others. (1) As to the *Advent*, Gen. 3: 15. Num. 24: 17. Zech. 3: 8. (2) As to *Christ's kingly office*, Isa. 32: 1. 55: 4. Dan. 2: 44. Rev. 19: 16. (3) *His universal and everlasting reign*, Ps. 72: 8. Dan. 7: 14. (4) *His divinity*, Ps. 45: 6. Isa. 40: 9-11. Ps. 110: 1. (5) *Place of nativity*, Mich. 5: 2. Num. 24: 17. (6) *Firth*, Isa. 7: 14. Jer. 31: 22. (7) *Vicarious sacrifice*, Isa. 53: 4, 6, 11. Dan. 9: 26. *As the Saviour*, Jer. 23: 5, 6. Mal. 4: 2. V. 6. *Unto us*—for our benefit. *A child—son*—expressions which distinctly relate to the *humanity* of Christ. *Is born*—the incarnation is spoken of with the certainty of an accomplished fact. *Is given*—A voluntary act on the part of both Father and Son, Jn. 3: 16. Gal. 1: 3, 4. *Upon his shoulder*—as robes of office are worn. *Wonderful*—for He is both God and man. A babe in a manger, yet a king! A series of wonders attended Him in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. *Counsellor*—Ps. 16: 7. Rom. 11: 33, 34. Rev. 3: 18. *The mighty God*—having strength to go through His undertaking; being able to save, Heb. 7: 25. *The Everlasting Father*—One with God from all eternity, John 1: 1, 2. 10: 30. 14: 9. 17: 5. *Prince of Peace*—His errand was peace, Luke 2: 14. Ephes. 2: 14. His legacy was peace, Jn. 14: 27. V. 7. *Increase of His government*—He must increase, Jn. 3: 30. His kingdom shall be more and more enlarged till it embrace the world, Num. 14: 21. Isa. 2: 2. 45: 23. 1 Cor. 15: 25. *No end*—It shall continue not only to the end of time, but throughout eternity, Dan. 2: 44. Rev. 11: 15. Upon the throne of David. Christ, being lineally descended from David, is sometimes called *David*, Jer. 30: 9. Ezek. 34: 23, 24; And the Son of David, Matt. 1: 1. Hence the throne and kingdom of David are given to Him, Luke 1: 32, 33. *To order it*—to give it a permanent constitution and to administer the same with prudence and equity. *With judgment and justice*—not by arbitrary decrees, nor by might and worldly conquest, but upon principles of truth and righteousness. Ps. 33: 4, 5. 45: 6. *The zeal of the Lord*—The love God has for His people and the regard He has for His own honour will ensure the accomplishment of all His promises, so that believers have a sure foundation on which to build their hopes for time and eternity. Prov. 29: 25. Quote some of the many precious promises of God. The ninety-first Psalm is full of them. See Isa. 43: 2, and Mal. 3: 17. And in the New Testament, such passages as Matt. 11: 28. 2 Cor. 6: 18, and Heb. 13: 5. Is the Babe of Bethlehem our King and Saviour? He is able and willing to save all that come unto God by Him. Heb. 7: 25.

The Beginning of the Gospel

JANUARY 1.

MARK 1: 1-13.

Golden Text, Malachi 3: 1.

MARK, or John Mark, as he is also called, Acts 12: 12—was probably one of the *seventy*, a native of Jerusalem, where his mother Mary resided, was the friend and companion of Peter, 1 Pet. 5: 13. Is supposed to have written his gospel under Peter's direction, and to be the founder of the Christian Church at Alexandria, where he suffered martyrdom in the 8th year of Nero. V. 1. *The Gospel*—The Greek means "good news." *Of Jesus Christ*—who is the Giver of the gospel and the subject of it. *The Son of God*—a declaration of the divinity of our Saviour—omitted by some authorities, A. V. Vs. 2, 3. *The prophets*—"In Isaiah the prophet," A. V. Isa. 40: 3. Mal. 3: 1. This reference to the O. T. was important to the Jews and is valuable to us as shewing the harmony betwixt the two. V. 4. *Did baptize*—The gospel begins with the preaching of the Baptist, who taught the same doctrines that Christ did, v. 15, and which He commissioned His disciples to preach, Luke 24: 47. *Repentance* is more than sorrow. In that sense Judas repented, Matt. 27: 3. It is a change of life—a turning to God, Jer. 31: 18; S. Cat. 87. V. 5. *All Judea*—put for a large number, for some refused to be baptized, Luke 7: 30. *Confessing*—a necessary thing to do, 1 Jn. 1: 9, but not to be mistaken for *conversion*. V. 6. *Camel's hair*—such as the old prophets wore. 2 Kings 1: 8. Zech. 13: 4. *Locusts and honey*—then used as food by the poorest, and eaten by the Arabs still. The rough garb and coarse fare of the Baptist recalled the days of Elijah, hence the question put to him, John 1: 21. V. 7. *Preached*—proclaimed the Word and will of God. All the prophets were preachers. Christ himself preached the Word, ch. 2: 2, and, ever since, preaching has been an effectual means of convincing sinners, S. Cat. 89. *One mightier*—He laid no claim to the Messiahship: would gladly stoop to the meanest office, like David, Ps. 84: 10. Matt. 23: 12. V. 8. *Water*—the emblem of *purification* which is only effected by the baptism of the Holy Ghost into Christ, Rom. 6: 3. Gal. 3: 27. V. 9. *Jesus came*—see Matt. 3: 13. Not that he *needed* baptism, but as an example, Heb. 2: 17. V. 10. *Like a dove*—the appointed sign by which John was to recognize Jesus as "The Christ," Jn. 1: 32, 33, which was confirmed by the voice from heaven declaring Him to be the Son of God, and which was again heard at the Transfiguration, ch. 9: 7. Vs. 12, 13. *Driveth him*—"Jesus was led of the Spirit," Matt. 4: 1. *The wilderness*—the lofty and rugged solitudes near Jericho. *Tempted*—tried, as was Abraham, Gen. 22: 1, with this difference: the good Spirit led Him into the wilderness, and Satan—the evil Spirit—was permitted to test Christ's faith in his Father. *Forty days*—a representative number: Moses at Sinai, Exo. 34: 28, and Elijah at Horeb, 1 Kings 19: 8. Jesus, being tempted, is able to help them that are tempted, Heb. 2: 18.

NOTE—The Letters N. V. stand for New Version.