

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XLVII.

Nov. 23. } THE GLORIFIED SAVIOUR. { Rev. i. 1879. } 10-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."—Rev. i. 8.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Rev. i. 1-9.... John to the seven churches.
T. Rev. i. 10-20.... The glorified Saviour.
W. Dan. vii. 9-18.... The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man.
Th. Rev. ii. 1-11.... Ephesus—Smyrna.
F. Rev. ii. 12-29.... Pergamos—Thyatira.
S. Isa. xli. 1-14.... The Holy One of Israel.
Sab. Isa. xlix. 9-19.... The First and the Last.

HELPS TO STUDY.

As stated in a former lesson, the fourth Gospel, the three epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation, were written by one person—the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James.

The last mentioned book, which contains our present lesson, is also called the Apocalypse (the Greek word used by the writer in the first verse). Both names mean *unveiling*, or *making known*.

The disclosures which the book contains—chiefly relating to the history of the Church of Christ—were made to John in the rocky islet of Patmos in the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago) to which he had been banished by the Roman emperor Domitian; and the book was written either there or at Ephesus, after the apostle had been released from banishment by the emperor Nerva.

The fact that this book is not only prophetic but highly figurative renders its interpretation peculiarly difficult; and various opinions have been given by commentators as to the particular events foreshadowed in it; but independently of its prophetic character, it contains very much that is calculated to instruct and support and comfort the Christian; preparing the individual believer and the Church at large for trial and persecution, and at the same time revealing the ever active care and watchfulness of the glorified Saviour, and giving repeated assurance of final triumph. Many a Christian martyr has gone to the stake with the poetic words of this book upon his lips, his imagination filled with its grand imagery, and his desires raised by its teachings to "the things which are above, where Christ dwelleth."

Our lesson contains a description of the opening scene of the wonderful vision, symbolizing the glorified Saviour in His relation to the Church; with the apostle's commission to write an account of the things revealed to him. The children will readily take hold of the following division: (1) *What John Heard*, (2) *What John Saw*, (3) *What John was to Do*.

I. WHAT JOHN HEARD.—VERS. 10, 11. It sometimes happens that the remote and lonely settler, if careless and godless, loses his reckoning of the days of the week and knows not when the Sabbath comes; but the true Christian is always careful to observe "the Lord's day," and it is no burden to him to do so, for he delights in it. John, even in his solitary exile, did not neglect the command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" and it was while thus following the path of duty that this precious revelation from God for himself and others was given to him.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. The words "in the Spirit" probably indicate not only that John was under the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, as all Christians are, but that he was inspired, and endowed for the time with supernatural perception. The word translated "was" really indicates transition and might be literally rendered *became*. For examples of inspiration see Ezek. ii. 2; 2 Peter i. 21; 2 Cor. xii. 2. For "Lord's day" see John xx. 19, 26.

I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet: The voice of the Son of God (John v. 25); the voice shall raise the dead (John v. 28). See also Psalm xxix. 3-9; lxviii. 33; Dan. x. 6. For "trumpet" see Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Thess. iv. 16.

Saying that I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. It is Christ that speaks, for in the 13th verse the speaker is called thus: "Son of Man," and in the 18th verse the speaker says "I am He that liveth and was dead." Here then, under the figure of *alpha* and *omega*—the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet—Christ proclaims His eternal existence, both past and future.

Unto the seven churches: Directly to the seven churches of Asia (Ephesus, etc.), with which John was previously and afterwards closely identified; and through them to the whole Christian Church in all ages—the number seven denoting completeness, perfection, or universality. The second and third chapters contain a message to each one of these churches, suited to its condition, and instructive not only to them but to other branches of the Church of Christ.

II. WHAT JOHN SAW.—VERS. 12-16.

To see the voice: Ellipsis for the source of the voice—the speaker. John's example of attention ought to be followed. An attentive listener generally looks at the speaker.

Seven golden candlesticks: Like the one candlestick with the seven lamps in the tabernacle, symbolizing the entire Church. Gold—purity and value. What is a candlestick for? What is the Church for?

Son of Man: The prophetic name of Christ (Dan. vii. 13), adopted by Himself (Matt. xvi. 13).

The garment down to the foot indicates the priestly office, and the golden girdle the office of king. Head and hairs white like wool . . . as snow, is said to denote purity, dignity, and glory; eyes as a flame of fire—searching power, holiness, omniscience; feet like unto fine brass, etc.—perhaps freedom from all grossness, fervid activity, and power to tread down enemies; voice as the sound of many waters—the strength of the comparison is in its indefiniteness; John does not say *how* many waters; and when a modern orator substitutes for this expression "deep-toned as Niagara," he belittles the voice. It would be well to compare the entire description with the description given in Daniel vii. 9; x. 5, 6.

In His right hand seven stars; The faithful ministers of Christ. Their position, "in His right hand," indicated His peculiar care over them and also His intention to use or wield them for the doing of His work. Sharp, two-edged sword: His Word, by which He conquers. Countenance as the sun shining in his strength: dazzling in brightness and majesty. In the days of the Saviour's suffering and sorrow on earth "His visage was marred more than the sons of men," but in His glorified state it is so resplendent that the seer selects the brightest object in nature to compare it with, and if he could have found a brighter object, he would, doubtless, have taken it.

III. WHAT JOHN WAS TO DO.—VERS. 17-20.

After being overpowered by this Divine vision, so that he fell at His feet as dead, and afterwards revived by the touch of the Saviour's right hand, and re-assured by the gracious words, fear not; I am He that liveth and was dead—the very Jesus who loved him and whom he loved—John receives his commission: Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and things which shall be hereafter. In the opening scene of the vision, already described, John had "seen" a representation of the glory, and power, and majesty, of Christ in His state of exaltation; of the position and use of the Church in the world; and of the Saviour's intimate relation to it and care over it. This he is authorized to write for the instruction of believers.

It is also directed to write "the things which are"—the condition of the churches existing at that time, their merits and their failings, their dangers and their duty.

And, finally, he is to write "the things which shall be hereafter"—the (then) future history of the Church; her struggles against the world and the flesh and the devil; her reverses, successes, st . . . deliverances, and ultimate triumph over every enemy.

Those who have Him for their friend who has the keys of hell and of death are surely safe. He "openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." To Him belong "the issues from death;" and in this fact His people have often found refuge in their last extremity.

THE SOONER THE EASIER.

Ella A. Drinkwater tells, in the "Sunday School Times," of an incident that is a most forcible illustration of the necessity of "lifting up the lads," instead of waiting until they become men. A gentleman was telling some children how he had been lifted up by his teacher when a mere boy, so that he could see over the top of the high old-fashioned pews, and give testimony as to his conversion. The teacher, now old, was sitting by, and interrupted the narrator to give the children this impressive lesson:

"I'll show you how I lifted him, children," exclaimed the old man in his quavering voice, rising painfully from his chair, and making his slow way across the breadth of carpeting that separated them; "I lifted him so," placing his wrinkled, trembling hands under the strong man's arms; but he could not lift him a hair's-breadth. "Ah, children, always remember this," admonished the old man turning to them; "I boosted him when he was a boy, but I couldn't do it now! He was easy to lift then, but now he has nearly two hundred pounds of flesh. It's the boys that may be lifted, and not the men, weighed down by flesh or sin."

THE SABBATH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

The "National Sunday School Teacher" thus corrects a mistake into which some superintendents fall: "There are some superintendents who do too much. They take too great a proportion of the work upon themselves instead of seeing that it is equally divided. Like mettlesome horses, they spring forward at the word, and tug away after a fashion that must move the load, or break a trace, or burst a blood-vessel. Although this is the right sort of a disposition to have as a subordinate, it is not the best in the world to have as a leader. No school will make much progress under such a superintendent. A superintendent should be an organizer as well as a worker. He should have the ability to get work out of other people. His intense energy should be utilized like that of an engine in a basement, that sets all the machinery of a factory to going, but does none of the weaving itself. It is better for the church, and better for the man, to have one man set ten others to labouring than for him to do the work of ten men."

DR. JOHN HALL advises all ministers to teach Bible-classes. "There are a hundred things," he says, "that you would not think of making the subject of a sermon that could be used in the Bible-class." He might have added that there are a hundred things concerning his parishioners that a minister will there find out, that he never would learn at the long range of the pulpit.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

Mark the forget-me-not by yon brookside.
Its roots the mud, its stem the waters hide;
Its blossoms seek the sky.
So, though thy feet be rooted in earth's slime,
Raise thou thy head above the waves of time—
Look up on high!

See how the blossoms, earthward bent a while,
Turn, as they open, to meet the sun's bright smile,
And, as they upward gaze,
First flush with pink, then mirror heaven's own blue,
And every floweret bears, of sunny hue,
A crown of rays.

O thou whose thoughts are fixed on this world's toys,
Look up to Him from whom are all thy joys.
The beatific sight
Will change thee till the human grow divine,
And at the last upon thy brow shall shine
A crown of light.

—Sunday Magazine.

WAYSIDE SIGHTS IN SYRIA.

There are not many birds to be seen in Syria, and those we have come across are of the species common in England, such as quails, two or three kinds of partridges, snipe, woodcocks, besides robins, wagtails, larks, and several varieties of woodpecker. One seldom or never hears a bird sing, but then I can't help fancying that it is because there are so few trees for them to alight upon. It is impossible to imagine a bird singing except on a branch. Think of a nightingale without a bush! The flowers are lovely, even at this inclement time of the year. Crocuses grow in profusion, and of every imaginable colour. They look so fresh and fragile that it seems little short of a miracle how they manage to push their delicate heads through the rock-bound earth. There are besides great patches of narcissus, tulips, and asphodels to be seen in every direction, and in places the sterile-looking ground is fairly covered with gum cistus and wild pinks. The oleanders, which fringe the streams, are more beautiful and luxuriant, with their masses of pink blossoms, than anything I ever saw. The blossoms are single, but in great trusses, and ever so much prettier than the double variety usually cultivated in England.

Whilst climbing slowly up a steep bank on the opposite side, a Bedouin of the tribe of Ben Issachar, mounted on a pretty black mare, overtook us at full gallop. He pulled up and joined our party, and we talked to him for some time through Karam. Albert offered to buy his long spear with silver-bound joints. At one end was an iron point to stick into the ground when not in use, and at the other end a sharp point of burnished steel. He was a most friendly and affable Bedouin, and showed us all his arms—pistols, sword, knife, and so forth. When we arrived at the rocky plateau at the top of the hill, he gave a sort of performance for our amusement, galloping about and whirling his lance with dramatic effect and many loud cries, as he thrust at and parried thrusts from an imaginary enemy. He turned and twisted his mare about with incredible ease and swiftness, only guiding her with a halter; for the bit, which is scarcely ever used except in warfare, hung idle from his saddle all the time. We rode together for some distance, and at parting, he took the charm from his horse's neck—a piece of crescent shaped wood—and presented it to me with a most graceful salaam. Altogether we were highly pleased with our fellow-traveller, until old Hadji Hassa let out that his parting words had been a strongly expressed wish to find any two of us alone in a place where he could use his weapons in earnest. Six together were beyond his ideas, so he made the best of his disappointment.—Mrs. Brassey in *Fraser's Magazine*.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. SKEAR, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

AN important concession to foreigners has been made at Tientsin, where a large hospital for the treatment of disease has been built by Leung Chang in gratitude for the recovery of his wife under the treatment of foreign physicians after the native doctors had given her up. The hospital is entirely under the care of foreign medical men.

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

BIRTH.

On October 30th, at 37 Baldwin St., Toronto, the wife of F. S. Roberts, of a son.