

6. What did John say that the coming Messiah would do? Bring out the contrast between John's baptism and that of Jesus, the one being an outward sign, the other a real inward cleansing. Discuss the figures of the "ax" (v. 10), the "fire" (v. 11) and the "fan" (v. 12). The point to emphasize is, that John pictured the Messiah as One

who should sternly judge and thoroughly remove all evil, so that His kingdom might be set up.

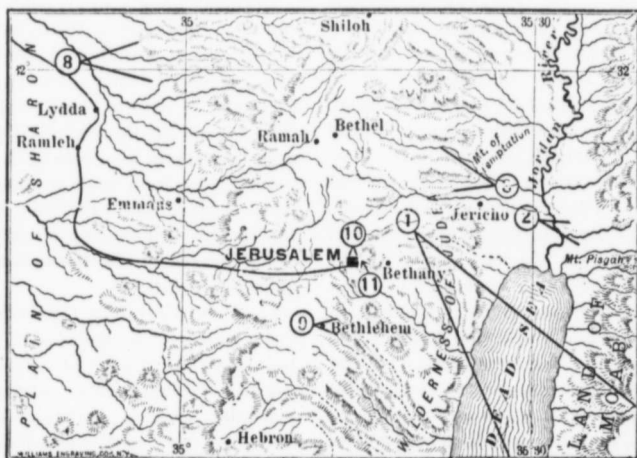
Let the point for a closing application be ways in which we may help to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus into hearts and homes where He is not known, both in our own, and in heathen lands.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

The Wilderness of Judea includes the whole of the eastern slope, or declivity, of the Judean mountains. It is a tract more than fifty miles in length. Its average width is nine or ten miles. It is not a desert

in the ordinary acceptance of the term, but a waste or wilderness, incapable of cultivation except in a few favored spots. From time immemorial it has been "a land not inhabited"; a land given over to wild beasts, to hermits and wandering tribesmen, and to outlaws in hiding. The most rugged and desolate portion borders the Dead Sea where a wall of towering cliffs rises abruptly, in some places, two thousand feet. A scene typical of



the whole region is given in Underwood & Underwood's stereograph (see page 13), *The Wilderness of the Scapegoat*. (The circle on the map marked 1 and the lines drawn from it indicate the

field of view embraced in the stereograph.)

A tradition, dating back to the time of the Crusades, fixes as the scene of our Lord's temptation, a wild and desolate mountain west of Jericho, called the Mount of Quarantania, from the Latin word for "forty", referring to the forty days' fast preceding the temptation. This mountain is shown (see circle 3) in Underwood's stereograph, *The Mountains of Judea*.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

God alone can provide a Saviour, but it is given to men to proclaim Him. v. 1.

"The livery of the King is purity, and the preparation for His coming, penitence." v. 2.

Self-denial is the pathway to spiritual power. v. 4.

True repentance is a matter, not of the lips only, but also of the life. v. 8.

The Holy Spirit consumes the evil in our hearts that He may make room for the good. v. 11.

Something to Look Up

[From the INTERMEDIATE QUARTERLY AND LEAFLET]

1. Jesus Himself said, that no one had ever been born who was greater than John the Baptist. Find His words.