

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON I.

Jan. 1.] [Mark 1:1-13.]

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 9-11.

- 1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God;
- 2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
- 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
- 4. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.
- 5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey.
- 7. And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.
- 8. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.
- 9. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.
- 10. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him;
- 11. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
- 12. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.
- 13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.—Mal. 3:1.

TOPIC.—Christ's Way Prepared.

LESSON PLAN.—1. THE FORERUNNER. 2. THE ONE MIGHTIER. 3. THE LATCHET. 4. THE HEAVENLY WITNESS. 5. THE EARTHLY WITNESS.

Time: A. D. 26, 27. Place: The desert—Jordan.

NOTE.—Our Saviour was born B. C. 4, or four years before the date, from which we reckon "the year of our Lord." If this mistake had not been made many centuries ago, the present year would have been A. D. 1886, instead of 1882.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—The author of this Gospel was John, whose surname was Mark. Acts 12:25. His mother was Mary, the sister of Barnabas. Col. 4:10. She lived at Jerusalem, and her house was sometimes the resort of the apostle Peter. Acts 12:13. Mark was converted under the preaching of Peter (1 Pet. 5:13), and his gospel was probably written under Peter's direction. It omits all mention of our Lord's birth and early years, and begins with the baptism of John. It narrates the leading events in mainly chronological order, in brief, rapid sketches, and yet with fulness of detail and graphic power. Its leading design is given in the first verse—to show that JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

I. THE FORERUNNER.—(1-6.) Parallel passages, Matt. 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18. V. 1. THE BEGINNING—as if he had said, "Here beginneth." THE GOSPEL—good news of salvation. JESUS—Saviour. CHRIST—the Anointed One, the Messiah, Luke 2:11. THE SON OF GOD—the second Person of the Trinity, Immanuel, God with us. THE PROPHETS—two passages are here quoted from the Old Testament in which the Forerunner is foretold—the first Mal. 3:1, and the second Isa. 40:3. MY MESSENGER—as the Messiah was to be a King, a herald was to go before him to prepare the people for his coming. V. 3. WILDERNESS—a wild, hilly, thinly-populated region. PREPARE YE—the reign of the Messiah was to be spiritual, and the preparation was to be one of the heart. Mal. 4:6. He called upon the people to get ready for his coming to take obstacles out of the way, to prepare to receive him. V. 4. THE FORERUNNER is pointed out. JOHN—the Baptist, the son of Zacharias, the priest and Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary, the mother of our Lord. DID BAPTIZE—this was the seal and badge of his ministry. IN THE WILDERNESS—a region east of Jerusalem bordering on the Jordan. PREACH—proclaim as herald. THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE—a profession of turning from sin. REMISSION—freedom from the penalty of sin. Without repentance there is no forgiveness. Luke 13:3. JORDAN—the principal river of Palestine, running through the country from north to south and emptying into the Dead Sea. CONFESSING THEIR SINS—we cannot be pardoned without confession. V. 6. CAMEL'S HAIR—coarse cloth woven from the hair of the camel. LOCUSTS—insects still used as food by the poor of Palestine and Syria. WILD HONEY—taken from rocks or hollow trees.

II. THE ONE MIGHTIER.—(7, 8.) V. 7. The people began to think that John was the Messiah (Luke 3:15), but he said, "I am not." John 1:20. THE LATCHET—the strap by which the sandals were fastened. SHOES—soles of wood or leather fastened to the feet by straps. To carry, to tie and to untie the shoes was the work of the lowest servant. V. 8. WITH THE HOBY GHOST—cleansing you from the defilement of sin and making you pure and holy. John's baptism—a mere sprinkling of water, which of itself had no cleansing power—was but a symbol of what Christ would do—baptize with the Holy Ghost.

III. THE HEAVENLY WITNESS.—(9-11.) Parallel passages, Matt. 3:13-17; Luke 3:21, 22. V. 9. IN THOSE DAYS—after John had been preaching and baptizing for some months. NAZARETH—a town of Galilee about sixty-six miles north of Jerusalem, where Jesus lived until he began his ministry. V. 10. STRAIGHTWAY—immediately. OPENED—or, according to the mar-

ginal reading, "cloven, or rent." THE SPIRIT—the Holy Spirit. LIKE A DOVE—in visible form. Thus the Holy Spirit gave witness to the Son from heaven. V. 11. MY BELOVED SON—"My Son the beloved." The word Son is used in a peculiar sense. The divine nature and eternal sonship of Christ are clearly implied. IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASSED—in whom I find my delight. See Isa. 42:1; Matt. 12:18; 17:5. Thus the Father gave witness to the Son from heaven.

IV. THE EARTHLY CONFLICT.—(12, 13.) Parallel passages, Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13. V. 12. DRIVETH—impels, strongly urges him. The same word in Matt. 9:138 is translated "send forth." WILDERNESS—tradition points to a high mountain near Jericho, on the banks of the Jordan. V. 13. TEMPTED—tried, attacked with artful efforts to lead him into sin. SATAN—the devil, the great enemy of Christ and his works. ANGELS MINISTERED—helped him, gave him such support as his suffering human nature needed. As Christ himself was tempted he knows how to feel for us when we are tempted.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. The gospel of Jesus is good news from God to man.
- 2. Our hearts must be prepared to receive the gospel.
- 3. Without repentance we cannot be saved.
- 4. If we confess and forsake our sins, we shall be forgiven.
- 5. Water baptism will not save us; we need the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- 6. God will send his Spirit into our hearts to cleanse us and give us new hearts if we ask him. Ps. 51:10.
- 7. Jesus is the Son of God; let us trust in him.
- 8. Jesus was tempted; he therefore knows how to help us when we are tempted.

REMEMBER that He whose earthly life we are now studying came into the world to be your Saviour; ask God to give you the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart to receive him; confess and forsake all your sins because they grieve God; pray for a pure and holy heart, that all your life may please him.

LESSON II.

Jan. 8.] [Mark 1:14-28.]

JESUS IN GALILEE.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 27, 28.

14. Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18. And straightway they forsook their nets and followed him.

19. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out,

24. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."—Isa. 9:2.

TOPIC.—Christ Beginning his Ministry.

LESSON PLAN.—1. BEGINNING TO PREACH. 2. BEGINNING TO CALL. 3. BEGINNING TO RULE.

Time: April, A. D. 28, more than one year after the last lesson. Place: Galilee, the Sea of Galilee.—Capernaum.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—Mark omits all mention of the events between our Lord's temptation and the imprisonment of John the Baptist (see John 1:19-5:47) and passes at once to his public official ministry, which began when that of John ended.

I. BEGINNING TO PREACH.—(14-15.) Parallel passages, Matt. 4:17; Luke 4:14, 15. John 4:43-46. V. 14. JOHN WAS PUT IN PRISON—see Matt. 4:12; 14:3, 4; Mark 6:17, 18. This was probably in March, A. D. 28. GALILEE—the most northern of the three provinces into which Palestine was divided. PREACHING THE GOSPEL—telling the glad news that the promised reign of Christ was now begun. V. 15. THE TIME IS FILLED—the set time has come.

II. BEGINNING TO CALL.—(16-20.) Parallel passages, Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11. V. 16. SEA OF GALILEE—now called Lake Tiberias. It lies on the east of the province of Galilee. It is of oval shape, fourteen and three-quarter miles long and seven miles wide. From among the fishermen on this lake, Christ chose his first followers, four of whom are here named. Three of them, Peter, Andrew and John, were already his disciples. John 1:35-43. He now called the four to be all the time with him, that he might train them to be his apostles. V. 17. FISHERS OF MEN—to save men was now to be their work. STRAIGHTWAY—at once. The Master calls us to

be his disciples. We should heed the call, and follow him first of all.

III. BEGINNING TO RULE.—(21-28.) Parallel passage, Luke 4:31-37. V. 21. CAPERNAUM—a large city on the western shore of the lake, near its northern end. Its site is a matter of dispute, but probably the ruins of Tell Hum mark the place. SYNAGOGUE—a Jewish place of worship where the Scriptures were read and explained and prayers were offered. It had ruling elders and a minister. Luke 4:20. Our Lord always attended church on the Sabbath; we should follow his example. TAUGHT—probably at the invitation of the elders. V. 22. NOT AS THE SCRIBES—the scribes were the writers and expounders of the law. They rested their teachings on the authority of the ancient doctors of the law. Jesus quoted no doctors, but gave the sense and applied the word with boldness. His preaching was plain, practical and pungent. V. 24. WHAT HAVE WE TO DO—what is there common to us? why should you interfere with us? I KNOW THEE—he knew that Jesus had come to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), and he cried in terror, "Let us alone." THE HOLY ONE OF GOD—the Messiah, whom God has set apart for this work of destruction. V. 25. REBUKED HIM—the evil spirit. Jesus never allowed the demons to bear witness to him. V. 26. HE CAME OUT OF HIM—but in so doing he showed all the spite and did all the harm he could. V. 27. AMAZED—the new Teacher commanded, as well as taught with authority.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. A lesson of repentance and faith—we must repent and believe the gospel.
- 2. A lesson of obedience—when Jesus calls, we must leave all and follow him.
- 3. A lesson of service—these disciples were not only to follow him, but also to serve him. We must work for Jesus.
- 4. A lesson of Sabbath-keeping—Jesus observed the day by attending public worship. We must imitate his example.
- 5. A lesson of deliverance—none but Jesus could cure this demoniac. None but Jesus can deliver us from Satan's power. Heb. 2:14. He is our Deliverer.
- 6. A lesson of Christ's majesty and power—we often speak of his love, gentleness and compassion. But he is the Son of God. All power is given to him in heaven and earth.

REMEMBER that Jesus still continues to us the ministry which he began in Galilee, not in his own person and presence, but by his word and ministers. To us the gospel is preached, and we are called upon to repent and believe, to follow him and obey his commands. Let it not be in vain that we hear these great truths, from Sabbath to Sabbath, in the church and in the Sabbath-school.

THE ROLL CALL

The art patrons of the North were especially quick to recognize the new military painter, and it was from the North that she received her first commission—the commission for "The Roll Call."

The subject of "The Roll Call" was of course the artist's own choice. It had long been in her mind, it was painted in buoyant confidence and hope, sent to the Academy and—the rest of it is history. So far Miss Thompson's relations with Burlington House may be thus succinctly described.—First year, rejected with a rent in the canvas; second year, rejected without a rent; third year, eked; fourth year, "The Roll-Call" on the line. The first intimation received by the artist, in her suspense, of the astonishing success of her work, came from the interior of the Academy. The selecting committee had hailed the picture in its presentation for judgment with a round of cheers—a generous and cordial recognition which took the artist fairly by surprise. Then came the royal speeches at the banquet, then the newspaper shout of congratulation, and then the "public" spoke. It is not given to many, even among great geniuses, to move the heart of the million. Masters in literature, in painting, in music, have been fain to content themselves with an audience "fit though few." But an audience of the whole people listened to this young girl's story of "Calling the Roll after an engagement in the Crimea."

The people, by the way, would have none of this academy-catalogue title; as usual with the things it really cares for, it gave the picture a name of its own. During the excitement created by the work, and literally unparalleled since Wilkie's "Blind Fiddler" occasioned a similar furore, the artist who had set the town in a ferment never relaxed labor for a week. Yet she had not only public applause, but the caresses of London society to tempt her from her easel. The public press was full of her. Wild stories were set afloat as to her origin and history; a quarter of a million of her photographs were sold within a few weeks; the retirement and quiet of her private life fostered the public curiosity and she became, in spite of herself and wholly through her work, a lion. An incident without precedent in the annals of the Academy occurred: Her picture was removed from its place on the walls in the height of the season by the Queen's command, and taken to Windsor for inspection; and so greatly was Her Majesty, whose interest in her army is intense, pleased with the work, that she intimated her wish to become its purchaser. The owner, whose

happy commission had given it being, loyally ceded it to her supreme claim.—Treasury of Art.

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