

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. 14.]

MARCH, 1881.

[No. 3.

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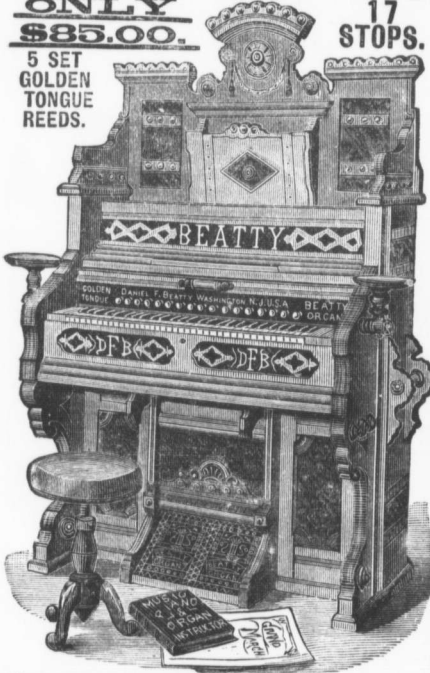
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VOLUME XIV.]

MARCH, 1881.

[No. 3.

"Follow Me."

AY, His voice hath said it, low and tender,
Calling in His wondrous mercy free,
Asking nothing that I could not render,
Only whispering sweetly—"Follow Me."

I was worn with anxious doubt and sorrow,
Sad because the way I could not see;
Fearing what might happen on the morrow,—
Then His message sounded—"Follow Me."

Through the mists of doubt and speculation,
Clouding fears and vain philosophy,
Came the call for earnest consecration,—
Rose the Captain's signal—"Follow Me."

Let me see His footprints where He leadeth,
He shall choose the path, what'er it be;
This is all the questioning spirit needeth,
Just to hear His answer—"Follow Me."

And when many paths around converging
Plunge my soul in great perplexity,
Oh, to *know* His voice mid life's loud surging,
Calling ever onward—"Follow Me."

Let me only feel His love abideth
As my portion through eternity;
Let me but believe His wisdom guideth,
While His mercy calleth—"Follow Me."

Pitying Saviour, when, past comprehending,
All Thy ways are hid in mystery,—
Till the last hour comes with solemn ending,
Breathe Thy life-commanding—"Follow Me."

Close round me Thy loving arms entwining,
Should that summons come on land or sea,
Jesus, to the brightness of Thy shining,
Speak the invitation—"Follow Me."

The Loom of Life.

ALL day, all night, I can hear the jar
Of the loom of life, and near and far
It thrills with its deep and muffled sound,
As tireless the wheels go always round.

Busily, ceaselessly, goes the loom,
In the light of day and the midnight's gloom,
And the wheels are turning early and late,
And the woof is wound in the warp of fate.

Click, click! there's a thread of love woven in;
Click, click!—another of wrong and sin!
What a checkered thing this life will be
When we see it unrolled in eternity!

When shall this wonderful web be done?
In a thousand years, perhaps, or one;
Or to-morrow! Who knoweth! Not thou nor I;
But the wheels turn on and the shuttles fly.

Ah, sad-eyed weavers, the years are slow,
But each one is nearer the end, I know;
And soon the last thread shall be woven in—
God grant it be love instead of sin.

Are we spinners of good in this life-web—say
Do we furnish the weaver a thread each day?
It were better, O my friends, to spin
A beautiful thread than a thread of sin.

WHAT shall I do for Jesus?

I'll mete my shortened day,
And gather up Time's fragments,
That might beside me lay:
Minutes and moments yet will yield
Some sheaves upon the gospel field,
If used to Jesus' glory.

Sunday School Items.

BY REV. E. BARRASS, M.A.

—The Lord Chancellor of England has been a Sunday-school teacher for forty years.

—The Methodist Sunday-school that permits any sort of agent or publisher to displace our own Sunday-school publications, on the plea of greater cheapness or excellence, will simply be deceived and disappointed.

—Mr. Spurgeon said recently—you can almost hear his clarion voice proclaiming it to his five-thousand assemblage—“Make the bridge from the cradle to manhood just as long as you can. Let your child be a child, and not a little ape of a man running about the town.”

—A pastor in Utica preached on the duty of parents to teach their children, at home, the lessons of the Sabbath-school. Notes were sent to the homes of the scholars at the same time. The result was very manifest on the ensuing Sabbath, in the preparation of the pupils.

—It is not what we earn, but what we save, that makes us rich. It is not what we eat, but what we digest, that makes us fat. It is not what we read, but what we remember, that makes us learned. All this is very simple, but it is worth remembering.

—Dr. Dio Lewis says that, though five out of six students in Harvard College use tobacco, yet, in fifty years, not one of them has graduated at the head of his class. The best scholarship has invariably been with that sixth of each class which did not use tobacco.

—Dr. Hastings, of Boston, in speaking of religious joy, and of singing as being the natural expression of that joy, remarked that some congregations had so little of it, they had to hire people to do their singing. “Why,” said he, “I would as soon think of hiring a man to eat my breakfast.”

—The New Zealand *Wesleyan* suggests that if the statistics of Sunday-schools published in connection with the recent Sunday-school centennial are no nearer to the truth than those assigned to New Zealand, the whole table is worse than useless, and explains thus: “The teachers of this colony are set down at 1,101,

and the scholars at 9,947, being a total of 11,648, whereas our last census returns state that in 1878 there were 62,273 persons in our Sunday-schools, or nearly *six* times the number given us in connection with the recent centenary celebration. Our own church alone returns more than is set down to the credit of the whole of New Zealand, its teachers being 1,139, and its scholars 12,209.”

—Rev. A. H. Gillett, Sturgis, Michigan, has inaugurated a new plan for Sunday-school Institutes, which is as follows: The pastors of a city come together and also bring as many of their prominent Sunday-school workers as they can induce to attend, and they agree to hold three sessions daily for four days. A fee of one dollar is charged to each pupil. Names are enrolled and all agree to attend the course of twelve lectures. After a few weeks another course of lectures can be selected and either the same pupils can attend or others can be induced to do so. Such an institute can be held in any locality, and Mr. Gillett argues that it will be found to be less expensive and so will be within the reach of such as cannot attend Chatauqua. Distinguished Sunday-school lecturers, such as Dr. Vincent and others, can be secured for a part or the whole of the course, as may be agreed upon.

—Now is the time to get down deeper into your Sunday-school work. Do not let a Sabbath pass without earnest, honest effort for Christ. There is great demand for persevering effort. If you have no Sunday-school, it is because you do not want any. If your school is dull and uninteresting, it is because you will have it so. There is nothing so intensely interesting as the truth you teach—no book so surrounded and filled with wonderful truths as the Bible. If we are to have a more intelligent and more faithful membership in the church, true to Christ and the doctrines of the church, in the coming years, the foundation must be laid now in the hearts of the young. Do not omit to have the Sunday-school lessons as matters of study and discussion in your home. Every Christian home should be a kind of Biblical Seminary. What exercise so profitable, or

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what fellowship so sweet and so lasting, as that which is linked with the study of the word of God? Down deeper into this blessed work. There is no time to waste. Remember, your own time, as well as that of the young, is precious. How precious!

—Rev. B. H. Bradley writes from Lucknow, India:—“One can spend the whole Sunday in going from one school to another, and can thus see about a thousand regular attendants, besides many others who always flock about. The work has spread to other stations. The International Lessons were introduced in 1873, and have been faithfully studied. The children are very regular in their attendance, and often leave their festivals to be at school. We often come home from street preaching thoroughly tired out and discouraged. In the religious fairs, where the multitudes assemble and listen to our preaching, we often feel that it is uphill work trying to influence the adult classes; but in our Sunday-schools we deal with different material. We realize that the words we say, and the lessons we teach, find their way down into the hearts of those before us and take root. The work of teaching is indescribably pleasant and very easy.

Who Have Left?

Look at your class-book and see what pupils were present on the first Sunday of this year. Have they been regular in attendance? If not, why not? Are they still in attendance? If not, why not? Are they still with you as members? Have you faithfully followed and laboured with absentees? Have you discovered the causes of delinquency? Have you tried to overcome them? Have any of your pupils passed from your class into other parts of the school? Have they left for other sections of the country? Have they abandoned the school entirely? How far have you sought faithfully to follow those that are gone? How far are you responsible for the loss of those who are no longer regular attendants? Are you to any degree responsible for indifference?

Do these questions contain in them any suggestion for the year that is to come?—*S. S. Journal.*

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Address, WILLIAM BRIGGS,
Publisher, Toronto.

The Sunday School Banner.

REV. W. H. WITHROW, M.A., EDITOR.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1881.

The "Sunday-School Assembly."

How to keep the older scholars in the Sunday-school is a question which continually presses upon the attention of Sunday-school workers. Dr. Vincent, who has inaugurated so many successful Sunday-school movements, proposes another new "Step Forward," which, he believes, will, to a great degree, prove the solution of the problem. It is the organization in every Sunday-school of what he suggests may be called "the Assembly." We take from a contemporary the following outline of his plan:—He proposes that in this new department, a kind of high-school in the Sunday-school, all persons of fifteen years of age and over be included; that the assembly be subject to such special regulations as may be adopted; that it use the same Bible lessons as are now used, but that to these be added special exercises, in the form of lyceum lectures, scientific and literary studies; that it acquire libraries of wider range

than are now in general use; that it be under the same general control as the other departments of the Sunday-school, having, however, a special board of officers, such as pastor, president, secretary, treasurer, and tutors; the pastor being the pastor of the church, and the president, when practicable, the superintendent of the school; and that the object of all this shall be "to promote the higher biblical, doctrinal, and general culture of the adults and young people of the church and community." Dr. Vincent thinks that one of the ends to be gained will be the permanent interest of the young people in the Sunday-school and Bible study, and that the present tendency of so many to absent themselves from the school because they think it is for children, will be in a great degree overcome. He offers the suggestion of this new departure as something tentative, and requests that Sunday-school people think upon it. It looks in the direction of a want that is as familiar as the Sunday-school itself. In schools of larger size, especially in cities and larger villages and towns, the experiment might be made. In general, the church fails to recognize its obligation to provide for its young people the means necessary for their higher social and intellectual development. They are usually left to find for themselves such resources as best they may, and too often their choice is not wisely made.

We trust that our next General Conference will, like that of the M. E. Church of the United States, make some disciplinary provision for the intellectual training, through the means of "Church Lyceums" or "Sunday-school Assemblies"—or something of the sort,—of the young people growing up under her care. In the meantime, any superintendent or teacher may organize such a local society or circle for reading and study. To our

knowledge, several have already done so. The programme of the C. L. S. C., or some modification of it, will admirably meet the requirements of the case. The bond between the school and the older scholars will thus be strengthened, and these scholars will be better fitted to discharge their duty in the church and in the world.

OUR *Quarterly Review Service* has been received with great favour during the past year. It is found to be an invaluable help in *clinching* the teachings of the quarter. Those for the present year will be no less valuable. Do not fail to order them: only 50 cents per hundred, or 6 cents per dozen, each quarter. It will, however, save much trouble if our friends will order for the four quarters in 1881 at once, viz.: \$2.00 per hundred copies for the year, or 24 cents per dozen for the year.

THE C. L. S. C. has taken vigorous hold in Canada. In this city a large Circle has been organized in the Metropolitan Church, and we believe also in Knox and other churches. We strongly commend these as the best form in which young people's Literary or Mutual Improvement Societies can be held.

With the growing circulation of *Pleasant Hours* we will make still further improvements. Its 208 large pages, with nearly 100 engravings, for 30 cents, or in quantities 25 cents, is as cheap as can be asked. The numbers for a year contain as much matter as an average 400 page book, which sells for about \$1.25 to \$1.75.

THE orders for "Matthew Mellowdew," the premium book offered with the *Methodist Magazine*, have come in very rapidly. It is now ready for issue. The *Guardian* premium is already issued, and gives very great satisfaction. This book contains 70 pages more and a handsome illustration, yet is given for the same low price of 30 cents to every subscriber to the *Methodist Magazine* for

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1881. As a still further inducement to Schools or private persons taking the *Magazine* for 1881, the 12 numbers for 1880 or 1879 will be sent for *half-price*, and the volumes for 1875 for *nothing*. A special discount where two or more copies are taken by Schools. Send for specimen and special rates.

The Lesson Commentary from the Sermons of the Boston Monday Club, which appeared in the BANNER last year, were received with such favour that we reproduce the similar series for this year. The book from which these are taken costs \$1.50; yet we give its substance, when space will permit, in addition to all the other matter of the BANNER, for less than half the price of that book alone.

The *Sunbeam* has several large additions to its subscription list, and will, we trust, be brighter and better than ever. Only 15 cents a year, for 26 numbers, making a book of 104 large pages, with 52 handsome cuts.

Book Notices.

Choir Anthems. A collection of new anthems, chants, etc., for use in public worship. By T. MARTIN TOWNE. Containing also a selection of choice quartets and choruses, suitable for funeral occasions. 160 pp.

This is the latest, and, we think, one of the best anthem books of the season. It seems to be admirably adapted to the wants of ordinary choirs and will undoubtedly supply a long-felt need. Price, \$3 per dozen; or 35 cents for a single copy, post-paid. Published by David C. Cook, 137 Madison street, Chicago.

The *Canadian Methodist Magazine* for February maintains its usual high standard. An interesting article, with numerous high-class engravings, describes Mrs. Brassey's visit to Spain, Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Mr. Sutherland gives a graphic account of his visit to Alexandria and Cairo, in Egypt. Nathaniel Pidgeon describes John Wesley's loyalty during the Pretender's invasion of England. Prof. Shaw, of the Montreal Theological College, gives a fine study, of special value to every Sunday-school worker, on the Youth of Jesus—a prominent topic of the International Lesson Notes for February. The legends from the apocryphal gospels about the Boyhood of Jesus are very curious. The editor tells the strange story of St. Francis, the monk of Assisi. The story of "Valeria, the Martyr of

the Catacombs," gives striking pictures of old Roman life. Price, \$2 a year, special discount to schools.

Gage's School Examiner and Monthly Review. Svo., pp. 32, \$1 25 per year. W. J. Gage & Co., 11 Wellington street, Toronto.

This is a new monthly, designed especially for school teachers and senior scholars. It is announced to contain full sets of model examination papers, and a survey of current thought and art with special reference to the teacher's point of view. It is under the able editorial management of C. P. Mulvany, M.A., Thos. Kirkland, M.A., and W. Scott, B.A. The first number exhibits a varied and interesting table of contents.

The Lesson Commentary.

LESSON X.] [MAR. 6, 1881.

THE WITNESS OF JESUS TO
JOHN.

Luke vii. 19-28.

I. *Jesus' Witness to Himself.*

JOHN THE BAPTIST was confined in Macherus, a gloomy castle beyond the Dead Sea, on the confines of the desert. His brief mission was over; the crowds that had attended his ministry were dispersed, and apparently indifferent to truths they had once eagerly received. He was left unvisited and seemingly forgotten, while his Lord, in a manner and tone far different from the severity he had employed in proclaiming Christ's coming, was preaching on the other side of the Jordan. He had spoken with unsparring rebuke, while our Lord was distinguished by the compassionateness of his speech, and his friendliness towards publicans and sinners. What did it all mean? His disciples, who were allowed by Herod Antipas to visit him freely in his prison, were sent to Jesus to inquire.

In this John is like us all. We sometimes need explanations. Jesus' ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" How do we know that Jesus is the Christ?

Jesus recognized the fact that the question was one that must spring to every man's consciousness, if not to his lips, and he appealed to every man's observation for a decision. John and we must judge for ourselves. We know Christ by his fruits. His life contains his credentials.

Any one can say he is the Christ. In fact, sixty impostors, did subsequently, at different times, declare themselves to be the Christ. But our Lord with innate delicacy, replied for substance: "You shall not take my word. Pretensions count for little. My life shall speak for itself. Look about you, and give an account to your master of what you see and hear."

Now Christ is known to be an authoritative teacher come from God by two things—his miracles and his instruction. If he has truth to communicate that God only can teach, then he must bring some authentication. That can only be as he possesses the power to do what man cannot do. An ambassador from a foreign court is known to be such only as he presents his commission duly signed and sealed with the king's seal. The miracles of Christ are God's seal to his authority. But the miracles are not complete without the message. The truth presented must be something important, something consistent with God's character and with the dignity of a divine embassy to earth. What does the message teach us as to these two credentials to Christ's mission?

1. As to *miracles*, we learn for one thing that they were *open to inspection*. John's disciples were invited to see and hear. Every one knew about them. They were not done in a corner. It would have been impossible to have imposed upon such large bodies of men, many of them unbelieving, as witnessed the restoration to life of the widow's son at Nain, or the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. When spiritism would do its wonders, it requires that the gas be turned down. Not so of these divine marvels. For them the brightest publicity was sought, and the fullest inspection invited.

Christ's miracles were of *great variety*. We see him exercising his power over nature, over evil spirits, over the laws of health, and over human life. His power was manifested in so many different ways that it could not be attributed to wonderful discoveries in physics or medicine, nor to any rare sleight-of-hand. It was a power never at fault, equally helpful at every turn.

2. The *instruction* of Christ was an indispensable and supplementary evidence in connection with his miracles. What were its characteristics? Christ comes with a *message*. He presents grand truths. He brings a revelation containing a series of directions for man's need. Christ is confessedly one of the great teachers of the world. He proves himself an ambassador from God by having something to say of sublime importance,—a theory of life, doctrines relating to the future, truths concerning God. It is by the grandeur of Christ's message that we know his miracles are genuine. When spiritism comes to us and drivels by the hour nonsense which it claims to be from Shakespeare and Milton, we may be pardoned for doubting the value of its pretended miracles. When Romanism claims to work miracles, we properly ask what great revelations of truth call for this outlay of supernatural force? It has lately been claimed that the cement and stone of Knock Chapel, in Ireland, will cure lameness. Very well; where is the divine message which is thus authenticated? There is none. Ah! Then there is certainly no miracle. An ambassador has something to say, and if a man presents credentials and then is dumb, we know his papers are a forgery. Christ's miracles are authenticated by the wonderful revelation which he makes, the grandest that ever fell from human lips.

Christ's message is one of *good-will*. It was a gospel. It was true that John appears to have been staggered for the moment. His prison meditations were darkened by a passing cloud, and he wonders at Christ's methods. His own preaching had been denunciatory. He had cried:

"Repent, repent, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

He was a prophet of the old dispensation, and spoke as was befitting the last stern messenger of the law.

But Christ came with a word of quite another sort. He brought peace and good-will to man. He did not contradict John's teaching, but he advanced beyond it. While he hesitated not to speak with all John's plainness of men's sins and their punishment, yet his tone was not as

was John's, that of denunciation. He met men with a divine compassion, which marked him as the Son of God.

Once more: Christ's message was *for the needy*. "To the poor the gospel is preached;" not so much to the poor in this world's goods as to the poor in spirit, to all who feel their need. (Isa. lxi. 1.) This was a peculiarity of Christ's work. The cultured Pagans of Greece and Rome sneered at the fact that Christianity addressed itself to the lower classes, and sought to reclaim the vicious. But this is its glory.

By this combination of miracles with instruction, what does Christ prove concerning himself? So far, only that he is a duly accredited messenger from God, and that whatever he says, he says with authority. All this might be, and yet he may not satisfy John or us that he was the Messiah, the one anointed to be prophet, priest, and king for human needs. How does he prove this?

1. His miracles and his teachings differed from the miracles and teachings of all others. "He spake with authority, and not as the scribes." He also wrought miracles, not in another's name, but in his own. Others might work miracles, but never without appealing to divine help. Christ, with a sublime self-consciousness and manifestation of divinity, wrought his miracles in his own power.

2. Both his teaching and his miracles were in direct fulfilment of prophecy. He made reply to John in words quoted in part from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. The Jewish teachers of the day taught that these passages referred to the Messiah, and John would instantly understand Christ, in quoting the words as fulfilled in him, to claim that he was the Messiah.

A prophecy is a modification of a miracle. Its fulfilment, proves that the statements of the prophet are worthy of belief. Its fulfilment, like a miracle, is a divine seal to the truth. So when we find one fulfilling it exactly, we are satisfied that whatever terms are applied to him in the prophecy belong to him by right. In the thirty-fifth of Isaiah we find the Messiah called God.

3. But after it is once proved by the wonderful conjunction of the miracles and teaching of Christ, that he is an authoritative teacher come from God, we cannot deny any claim which he may make for himself. So, then, the claim which we have just seen he did delicately make is proved to be just, not only by prophecy, but by the previously established authority of Christ.

But our Saviour does not leave the subject here. He is anxious lest John, in his very natural and not improper inquiries, be unjustly blamed. We have, then,

II. *Jesus' Witness to John.*

It is noticeable that when men undertake to test Christ, they are really, though it may be unconsciously, subjecting themselves to a test from Christ. Their own character is laid bare by their attitude toward Christ. This is quite in accordance with the prophecy of Simeon, who, with the infant Saviour in his arms, exclaimed, that through the child should the thoughts of many hearts be revealed. The question, "What think ye of Christ?" is, in truth, a test-question as to the eternal welfare of him who answers it.

Christ was zealous for the reputation of the noble prophet, who was languishing in Machærus. John was one to be admired, and Christ proceeds to commend him to his disciples. He refers to John's greatness under three particulars.

1. He had *firmness of character*. He was not like one of those tall and slender reeds, growing along the Jordan, which under the passing breeze will stretch its length upon the ground, and then recover itself unhurt. His question just now might seem to indicate a wavering nature, but such was not John. He was no mere time-server, swaying this way or that with every wind of doctrine, or every breath of popular prejudice. No; he was a rare man, sturdy like a cedar of Lebanon, that stands the shock of a thousand storms. He was a hero, deserving honour for his manly steadfastness to conscience.

2. He was also *indifferent to hardships*. He was quite content with harsh raiment. A garment of camel's-hair and a leathern girdle were enough for him. There is a

peculiar grandeur in men who scorn self-seeking, and care nothing for self-denial. It is related of a certain custom-house officer in England, years ago, that when ordered to vote a certain way he replied unblushingly, "I have fourteen good reasons why I should obey your Majesty,—a wife and thirteen children." But all men are not of such a calibre. Some are of a more heroic mould; they will laugh to scorn any attempt to restrain them from duty by personal deprivations. John was ready to give up all things, even life itself, for the truth, and this gave him a colossal grandeur.

3. This list of John's qualities is not complete unless we mention his *prophetic gifts*. He was a prophet, and much more than a prophet. It is a great honour to be God's messenger on earth. An ambassador at a foreign court represents, for the time being, the king himself. The king is honoured or insulted in his person. An insult to an ambassador may be cause for war. A prophet is God's ambassador. The privilege and dignity of his position, then, cannot be surpassed.

But John, we are told, was more than a prophet. This came from his relation to Christ. He had had the privilege not only of prophesying of Christ, but of inducting him into the Messiahship by the rite of baptism. He had swung open the door for Christ, and thus while reviving the spiritual signification of the old dispensation, stood on the very threshold of the new.

Out of this grows the concluding thought of the passage: "Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The Christian reflects Christ as John could not. John represented the old dispensation. He that lives in the new dispensation has privileges vastly greater. He has what John could not have—the constant presence of Christ. We are none of us great in ourselves; we are great only in what God has done for us. The believer of the Christian dispensation has had a work of grace wrought in him, through Christ, that makes him a wonder to heavenly hosts.

LESSON XI.]

[MAR. 13, 1881.]

THE WOMAN THAT WAS A SINNER.

Luke vii. 36-50.

A WRITER has found a beautiful motto for this scene in the words of the Canticles, "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth." While we read, the fragrance of penitential love clings to the story as the odor of the spices lingered about the emptied casket.

Earlier studies have made us familiar with the Oriental customs at feasts, the greeting kiss, the cooling water, the reclining with feet extended beyond the couch, the freedom which allowed strangers to enter the room unbidden; and we pass at once to the teachings of the lesson. These are the Need, the Conditions, and the Blessings of Forgiveness.

I. *The need of forgiveness.*

We see the longings of a guilty soul for rescue. Something very urgent drew this woman into the Pharisee's house in the face of its proud, hard master. Remorse drove, forgiveness beckoned. The revenge of a bad life had come upon her. She had tried to the full the pleasures of wickedness, had held back nothing, not her name nor her womanhood; and now the excitement was spent, the joy perished, and she faced the utter and absolute disappearance of all the false delights of sin, while the real delights of the soul seemed put forever beyond her reach. The past was shame, the present desolation, the future despair. In the hour of her need Jesus met her. As He went about her town doing good and speaking gracious words, the light crossed her path. Here was one whose presence was peace, about whom purity hung like a garment; but instead of repelling wretched souls, like the religious teachers she had been used to see, He welcomed and drew them to Himself. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" she may have been in hearing when He spoke these very words. They called Him "a friend of sinners;" she was a sinner, and needed a friend. Then we see her pressing into the room,

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low at His feet with tears and kisses and costly ointment—for she has found a Saviour.

How many who have not sinned as she sinned know at least part of her burden, the wretchedness of a mis-spent life! Too often we will learn only by experience that the lowest pleasures are the least rewarding and wear out soonest, that the whole world cannot satisfy the soul. After all the hungriest part of a man is not the body, nor the mind, nor even the heart, but the spirit which only God can fill.

II. *The conditions of forgiveness.*

The sinner's only refuge is in Christ. Unquestionably his first impulse is to get away from God, to diminish in the same way His opposition to sin. If holiness were not so holy, if, by and by, it would forget to demand so much, if the Almighty would let me go, instead of being continually upon my track or cross my way! But the guilty soul can neither change God nor escape Him. Why, the man belongs to God; he is His child. We cannot throw off earthly parentage, still less the divine; we can only dishonour it. No man has any right to surrender himself to evil; indeed he cannot do it. He may steal his service from God and sell or give it to the devil; but himself he cannot; he is not his own.

The possibility of forgiveness depends, not on the degree of guilt, but on repentance and faith. This principle in redemption has been overlooked by Simon the Pharisee. He thought himself a very proper man; he was inclined to respect his guest, but evidently did not understand Him. As to the woman, he knew what she was; he was angry at her presence, despised her tears, and began to despise the One she followed. He held his tongue, but his eyes asked questions and his face spoke contempt. So the Master has a word for him also. "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon can answer that well enough, but he is not ready for the startling contrast which shows how the one

he scorns has shamed him. "Thou didst patronizingly ask me to thine house, but it was I that condescended in coming; thou didst refuse the courtesies due an honoured guest, but art thyself only a bankrupt debtor; thy lack of love proves thy lack of forgiveness. Seest thou this woman, her lowly services, her precious offering, her grateful tears? She too was a debtor, but this great love shows what great forgiveness she has received." The man got his first glimpse of the truth that the degree of guilt has nothing to do with forgiveness, nothing; for there is no crime so great that it exhausts the power of the cross, no fault so trifling as to be pardoned without repentance and faith. Grant that the woman was a far worse sinner than he, her need ten times sorer, her desert of punishment ten times greater. But she has received the absolution "Thy sins be forgiven thee," which he has never gained. Even he cannot help seeing that a great sinner greatly forgiven is better off than one with little sin but no forgiveness. This is a lesson to heed. Some one tells us that we must repent; we must go to measuring ourselves by each other, and there is none of us but can find somebody who plainly owes us five hundred pence to our fifty; and for all that we may not be better off. We may know all about Christ; the Saviour may come to our door, enter our home, and yet leave us as guilty as He found us. Nor is it comparison with an outward law which is the test of piety. We may believe that Simon had kept all the commandments and the traditions of the elders besides. The woman had broken every law which came in her way. But another door into the kingdom of heaven had been opened to her, and she had entered in. The Pharisee in his proud self-righteousness was actually in need of the larger forgiveness.

III. *The blessings of forgiveness.*

At least we know how it was with the woman. She enters trembling and ashamed. She goes out with gladness which no other experience can give. She has found the friend of sinners, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; not stifles and crowds them back out of sight, but taketh away, so that they are hers no longer.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

MARCH, 1881.

A. D. 27.

March 6.

LESSON X.—WITNESS OF JESUS TO JOHN; or, A Shining Light.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The second year of Christ's ministry has now opened. On a visit to Jerusalem at the pass-over-season he has healed the cripple at Bethesda, and thereby awakened attention from the throngs sojourning in the city, (John 5;) he has returned to Galilee, and chosen out of his many professed followers twelve disciples to receive his constant instruction, (Luke 6;) has delivered to them and the multitudes around the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. 5-7;) and has wrought miracles upon the dying servant of the centurion at Capernaum, (Luke 7. 1-10,) and on the dead son of the widow at Nain. Luke 7. 11-17. But while increasing thousands followed the footsteps of Jesus, and the expectation of the masses mounts higher and higher concerning him, John the Baptist, his forerunner, who in other days had borne testimony to his Messiahship, is now sitting in his lonely dungeon at Machærus, by the Dead Sea. From the followers who visited his prison John heard of the crowds attending on Christ's ministry and of the mighty works wrought by his hand; and he learned, too, that, instead of founding kingdoms, Christ was going to and fro as a teacher and a healer. The chill, silent, and solitary dungeon had oppressed the soul of one who was wont to the free air of the wilderness and the active life of a prophet; and perhaps the reports, coloured by the rivalry of his own followers, gave him a somewhat mistaken view of the work of Christ. Across the soul of the prisoner there crept the faint shadow of a doubt, whether this were, after all, the promised Redeemer of Israel. To strengthen his own faith and to meet the questions of his disciples, he sends a message to Jesus, with the plain inquiry, whether he were indeed the Messiah or not. The messengers come into the Saviour's presence, and find him engaged in works of mercy. They behold his touch restoring sight to the blind eyes and purity to the leper's skin; his word lifting the sick to health and the dead to life, while all around the needy hearts of the masses are fed by his gracious words. He bids the messengers bear to John's cell by the sea the news of what they saw and heard, already pointed out in prophecy as the tokens of Messiah's coming. Isa. 35. Then turning to the multitudes, he presents his divine testimony to John as the last and greatest of the prophets, noble in his character and glorious in his mission; while higher even than the privilege of the herald was his honour who should stand within the Gospel gates toward which John pointed, but into which he could not enter.

Luke 7. 19-28.

[Memory Verses, 26-28.]

19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Dan. 9. 25: From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks.

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 19. And John. John the Baptist, who had been imprisoned by the tetrarch Herod Antipas, six months or a year before, at Machærus, a gloomy castle on the east of the Dead Sea. **Two of his disciples.** A few of his former followers still remained with him, but most of the people had by this time turned toward Jesus, whose star was now in the ascendant; though in a few months he too was to be forsaken by the fickle multitude. 1. The favour of the world is fleeting; let us rather seek the favour of God which abideth forever. **Sent them to Jesus.** Who was then in Galilee; the precise place being unknown. **Art thou he that should come?** The expected Messiah. Some have supposed that the question was asked for the benefit of John's followers, but the fact that the answer was directed to John himself, the language in vers. 23 and 24, and the consideration of John's circumstances, all point toward a doubt rising in the forerunner's mind. He did not cherish that doubt, but at once sent it to the Lord to be quelled by receiving the evidences of his Messiahship. 2. Even those who have borne testimony to Christ may be tempted to distrust or to doubt him. 3. The best way to overcome doubts is to take them to the Lord in prayer. 4. We can send our messages to Christ far more easily than could John the Baptist.

20, 21. John Baptist hath sent. The confinement of the prison had worn hard on a nature accustomed to freedom and activity; the accounts he heard of Jesus were not such as he had expected from the King of Israel; and perhaps he was im-

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.

Luke 4: 21: This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

1 Cor. 1: 23: We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John. What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

Matt. 3: 1: In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Mal. 3: 1: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. Luke 1: 76: Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is

patient of the Saviour's slowness in asserting his regal power. **In the same hour.** Jesus gave an answer in deeds rather than words, not making assertions of his claim, but showing the evidences on which it rested. 5. The doubts of men are not to silenced by authority, but by proofs of the truth. **He cured many.** Working in their presence miracles which had been predicted of the Messiah, and were the strongest testimony in his behalf.

22, 23. **Tell John.** This shows that it was John himself, and not merely his disciples, whose faith needed strengthening. **Ye have seen and heard.** So that their testimony would be all the more direct and clear, coming from their own knowledge, and not hearsay. 6. The strongest evidence of the Gospel is that of personal experience, of which every true Christian can bear witness. **Blind see, etc.** In Isa. 35: 5, 6, these signs had been given as destined to accompany Messiah's kingdom. 7. The fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy is one of the proofs of New Testament truthfulness. **To the poor the Gospel is preached.** Those who were most in need of the comforts of the Gospel, and most apt to be overlooked by the teachers of mankind, were receiving special attention from him to whom souls were more precious than estates. **Whosoever shall not be offended.** Literally, "made to stumble," meaning, "to fall into sin by misunderstanding." Not a rebuke, but a caution to John, who was in danger of mistaking the plan of Christ's kingdom, and thereby be led into doubt. 8. Let us trust Christ, even when we fail to comprehend him.

24. **Were departed.** He commends in their absence, rather than in their presence, that his praise may not seem flattery; and at once, in order to correct any impression of John's wavering on the minds of the people. **Concerning John.** 9. The true friend is he who speaks to us in warning, and of us in praise. **Into the wilderness.** He asks what it was that drew the crowds from their homes to the shores of Jordan, where John preached. **A reed.** In effect, telling the people that John was not, what they might have inferred from his question, a fickle, vacillating man, now believing and now doubting; but a man of firm character, constant in prosperity, and firm under the hate of Herod and the neglect of the people. 10. God's heroes must be men of firmness and strength of purpose.

25, 26. **A man clothed in soft raiment.** An allusion to the rough garb and self-denying life of John the Baptist, who showed thereby his superiority to influences that control ordinary mortals. **In king's courts.** Where they might look for a Herod, but would not find a John. 11. God's eyes often look with interest upon the cottage than upon the palace. **A prophet.** Here Christ bears his testimony that John not only held a place with Samuel, Isaiah, and Elijah, and the rest of the goodly fellowship of the prophets, but that in honour he was above them all. **More than a prophet.** Others looked for a Saviour centuries distant; John alone of the prophets beheld him and pointed to him close at hand, and baptized him for his work, thereby witnessing the fulfillment of his own predictions.

27, 28. **Of whom it is written.** In Mal. 3: 1. Christ here declares that John came as Elijah was foretold to come; and thereby indirectly asserts his own divinity, since "the messenger" was to come before "the Lord." The highest honour of John was not for his prophetic power, but as the forerunner of Christ. **Prepare thy way.** By awakening the attention of the people, and leading them to a reformation. **Born of women.** An expression for "mankind." **Not a greater.** 12. God's estimate of greatness is very different from man's. Many would call John's life a failure, cut down ere its prime, but Christ stamps it as complete success. **Least in the kingdom.** John stood on the threshold of the kingdom, but

least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Matt. 13, 16, 17: Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

the least disciple was within its doors; John saw Christ, but the disciple could comprehend his redemption through the cross as John never could; John was the giant on the plain; the least disciple is the child on the mountain summit who can see farther. "The learned Apollos, in the twilight of John's teaching, knew less than the humble tent-makers, Aquila and Priscilla." Acts 18, 24-28. 13. There is not an inspired prophet of the ancient day whose privileges are equal to those of the least of the saints in Christ now.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He was a burning and a shining light. John 8, 35.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 682, *New Hymn Book*, S. M.

How blessed are our ears
That hear this joyful sound,
Which kings and prophets waited for,
And sought, but never found!
How blessed are our eyes
That see this heavenly light!
Prophets and kings desired it long,
But died without the sight.

No. 723, *New Hymn Book*, 7s.

Hasten, Lord, the glorious time,
When, beneath Messiah's sway,
Every nation, every clime,
Shall the gospel call obey.

Bless we, then, our gracious Lord;
Ever praise his glorious name;
All his mighty acts record,
All his wondrous love proclaim,

No. 727, *New Hymn Book*, 8,7,8,7,4,7.

Thine the kingdom, power, and glory;
Thine the ransomed nations are;
Let the heathen fall before thee,
Let the isles thy power declare;
Judge and conquer
All mankind in righteous war.
Honour, glory, and salvation
To the Lord our God we give;
Power, and endless adoration,
Thou art worthy to receive;
Reign triumphant,
King of kings, forever live!

Time.—A. D. 27, at the beginning of the second year of Christ's ministry, about three months after the events of the last lesson.

Connecting Links.—1. Christ's second passover at Jerusalem, and the miracle at Bethesda. John 5, 1-17. 2. Return to Galilee, and various miracles. Mark 3, 1-12. 3. The appointment of the twelve apostles. Luke 6, 12-19. 4. The Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5, 7. 5. Miracles at Capernaum and Nain. Luke 7, 1-17.

Place.—Jesus in Galilee. John the Baptist in prison at Macherus, near the Dead Sea.

HOME READINGS.

M. Testimony of the miracles. Luke 7, 19-28.
Tu. Testimony of the forerunner. John 3, 21-35.
W. Testimony of the Scriptures. John 5, 39-47.
Th. Testimony of Jesus. John 4, 13-26.
F. Testimony to the blind man. John 9, 24-39.
S. Testimony to the council. Mark 14, 55-63.
S. Testimony of Stephen. Acts 7, 48-60.

QUESTIONS ON THE OUTLINE.

1. The Question. v. 19, 20.

Who sent the question?
Where was he at this time?
What led to his imprisonment?
Who brought the question?
What was its import?
What was the motive for the question?
Does the question indicate a doubt in John's mind as to the Messiahship of Jesus?
What causes might have led to such a doubt?

2. The Answer. v. 21-23.

Why did not Jesus give a direct answer to John's question?

How did he answer it? #

Why was this answer the more complete and satisfactory to John?

What did these evidences prove?

What blessing did Christ pronounce?

How did it apply to John?

3. The Testimony. v. 24-28.

When and how had John borne testimony to Jesus? John 1, 29-31.

What made Christ's testimony at this time especially precious?

For what elements of character did he give honour to John?

What high praise did he bestow upon him?

How did John illustrate the Golden Text?

Who enjoy higher privileges, and wherein?

How do these words apply to us?

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The Messiahship of Jesus.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where does this lesson show—

1. What to do with our doubts concerning the Gospel?
2. What are the best proofs of the Gospel?
3. What are our privileges in the Gospel?

WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

1. When you have troubles, tell them to the Lord. 2. Never doubt that Christ is your Saviour. 3. Remember what great things he can do for you. 4. Be a shining light in guiding others to Christ.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Herod, the ruler of Galilee, do to John the Baptist? He put him in prison.

2. What did John send to Jesus from his prison? Messengers with a question.

3. What did they ask of Jesus? "Art thou he that should come?"

4. How did Jesus answer them? By showing his miracles.

5. What did Jesus call John the Baptist? The greatest of the prophets.

6. Who did Jesus say was greater in privileges than John? The least in his kingdom.

7. What, then, are we taught in the tenth lesson? Our honour as Christ's followers.

ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Character Commended by Christ.

I. THE BELIEVING CHARACTER.

Blessed . . . not be offended in me. v. 23.
"Unto you . . . which believe . . . precious." 1 Pet. 2, 7.

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II. THE STEADFAST CHARACTER.

A reed shaken with the wind. v. 24.

"Be ye steadfast, unmovable." 1 Cor. 15. 58.

III. THE SELF-DENYING CHARACTER.

A man clothed in soft raiment. v. 25.

"Endure hardness, as good soldiers." 2 Tim. 2. 3.

IV. THE WITNESSING CHARACTER.

This is... my messenger. v. 27.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me." Acts 1. 8.

V. THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Least in the kingdom... greater. v. 28.

"Blessed are your eyes... they see." Matt. 13. 16.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Thoughts Concerning Christian Privilege.

1. Our privilege is to know that Christ has come, and come to save us personally. v. 19.

2. Our privilege is to bring all our doubts, temptations, and fears, directly to Christ, without the intervention of a messenger. v. 19.

3. Our privilege is to examine the evidences and foundations of our faith, assured that they will stand the test. v. 22.

4. Our privilege is to receive from Christ a personal testimonial of our acceptance in the witness of the Spirit. v. 24.

5. Our privilege is to look at the life of Christ as a whole, surveying it in all its relations, and to comprehend it better than those who lived in his own time. v. 22.

6. Our privilege is to enjoy all that is foretold and foreshadowed under older dispensations. v. 28.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

11. *What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?*

It is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper to examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; and whether they have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and are in charity with all men.

1 Corinthians 11. 28. Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

I was reading yesterday the journal of a missionary in Central Africa. One day while on a journey, as food ran short, he went off into the bush in search of game. Night overtook him, and he missed his way, and as hour after hour went by, tramping hither and thither, shouting, and firing off his gun, he began with horror to feel that he was really lost in the depths of an African forest full of wild beasts. His only hope now, under God, was in the stars. By them

he still strove to guide his way; and with their help he did, after some strange adventures, at last regain his camp.

Our Golden Text speaks of a "burning and shining light." It was Christ who used these words; and he went on, "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light." So did the wandering missionary in the stars; or if he was too anxious actually to rejoice, at all events those stars were a great comfort to him. A star's light is feeble enough, but it was enough for the purpose; and if in our northern latitudes we sometimes speak of Jupiter and Sirius "blazing" in the heavens, much more in a tropical sky might we apply such words as "burning and shining" to a star. But it was only "for a season." By and by the sun rose above the eastern horizon, and where were these "burning and shining lights" then?

The paling of the stars just before the dawn illustrates what happened to John the Baptist when Jesus came forth from his quiet home at Nazareth, and drew all the people round him. It was of the Baptist that Jesus said the words of our Golden Text. He was the "burning and shining light." In his light the nation did rejoice "for a season." Then arose the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings, and John's own words at once began to be fulfilled, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3. 30.

And now a message from John is brought by two of his followers to Jesus. Where from? This is an important question, for in the answer lies the key to the meaning of the message. Luke does not tell us in the verses before us; but he has already told us (chap. 3. 20) that the Baptist had been cast into prison, and Matthew, in the parallel passage (Matt. 11), says distinctly that the message came from the prison.

It is a strange message. Fancy the man who had pointed to Jesus as "the Lamb of God" and "the Son of God" (John 1. 29, 34), sending to him, and asking, "Art thou the Coming One?" No wonder some have therefore held that the two disciples were sent merely for the confirmation of their own faith. I believe, on the contrary, that John himself was perplexed. Consider—

(a) He was in prison—and what a prison! A dungeon in the gloomy Castle of Macharus, in the wild mountain country east of the Dead Sea, as we know from Josephus. What a place for a man like John, used all his days to a free and unfettered life.

(b) "How often," says Farrar, "have even the most generous and dauntless spirits been crushed and effeminated by such hopeless captivity! When the first noble rage or heroic resignation is over—when the iron-

hearted endurance is corroded by forced inactivity and maddening solitude—when the great heart is cowed by the physical lassitude and despair of a life left to rot away in the lonely darkness—who can be answerable for the level of depression to which he may sink?"

(c) Had not John reason to be perplexed? What he had predicted that Jesus would do was really not being done. Where was the manifest "baptizing with the Holy Ghost?" Where was the "purging of the floor," the "burning up of the chaff!" Herod's court as vicious as ever, the Pharisaic rulers as hypocritical as ever, and the Messiah spending his time healing the sick and teaching the poor in Galilean villages—what could it mean? And among all those miracles, why not one to release his forerunner from prison? No, not even a word sent to him. That Jesus was indeed sent from God John could not doubt; but was he, like himself, a forerunner too? was he, as some people said (Matt. 16. 14), Jeremiah? Were they to look for yet another coming One to be the king?

(d) Once more. Remember this, that John's doubts were in a certain sense right. The human, mortal Jesus of Nazareth was not to do these things. The baptism of the Spirit was not fully to take place till after the Ascension; the gathering out of the "wheat" would be done then, by the Spirit, through the apostles; the judgments on the Jewish nation were not to come from a visible, but from an invisible, King, from Jesus glorified; the great final judgment would not be till he came the second time in glory. We know all this, and we understand the purpose of the First Advent, and its limitations; but John did not; and "in the multitude of his thoughts within him" in that solitary cell, he might well wonder.

Our lesson is entitled, The Witness of Jesus to John. A grand witness it was. Not "a reed shaken with the wind," despite the doubt his question indicated. Not "a man clothed in soft raiment." But a prophet—more than a prophet—the messenger before Messiah's face—greater than any born of woman. Yes, "a burning and a shining light," though that was not said on this occasion, but at Jerusalem, before the Jewish rulers. John 5. 35. But after all, the main subject of our passage is not the witness to John, but the witness to Jesus. John was a burning and a shining light, but what did his light show? Like the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the Magi, it led the way to Jesus. And so, the real subject of the verses before us is the proofs that Jesus was the true coming One.

See how this was proved, both to John and to the Jews.

1. *Proved to John.* Jesus did not explain all the difficulties in his faithful servant's mind. But he let the two disciples see his miracles and hear his teaching (ver. 21), and then bade them go and tell it all to their master. It has been well observed that the Baptist's teaching indicates a peculiar knowledge of and habit of using the prophecies of Isaiah; and so Jesus did and said just what Isaiah had declared that Messiah would do. But was there anything new in this? Apparently John had heard of all of these mighty works before. Ver. 18; Matt. 11. 2. So that really the message was simply this, Be patient; let not your faith falter; all will be right; and a blessing awaits him who stumbles not at these difficulties. Ver. 23.

2. *Proved to the Jews.* Why did Jesus then go on to speak of the reed shaken with the wind, and so on? Was it to vindicate John? Incidentally it did that; but that does not seem to me the primary object of the question. Jesus does not say, "When ye went out, what did ye see?" but, "What went ye out to see?" The purpose of this and the other questions was surely to remind the people of John's testimony to himself.

Let me paraphrase the passage: "A year ago you were all hastening down to the Jordan. What for? To stare at the waving reeds? ["Stare" is the literal meaning.] Why, the idlest trifler went for more than that. Nor was it a reed you did see: John would not now be in prison if he were so easily "shaken." But did you go to see an easy, indulgent man, who would help you to a life of luxury? You would not have gone to the wilderness for that, but to Herod's court: John's life would not suit you. Well, did you go to see a prophet? If so, should you not believe what he said? He was indeed a prophet—more than a prophet—the messenger Malachi spoke of—greater than earth's greatest men. But then what was his prophecy? Before whose face did he go? You believed in John, believe also in me; and in my kingdom even a little child will know more than John. *Minimum maximi est majus maximo minimi* (as old Matthew Henry happily puts it), the least of the greatest is greater than the greatest of the least—as "a dwarf upon a mountain sees more than a giant in the valley."

I have thus tried to show the real bearing of this remarkable passage. It has always seemed to me that the commentaries miss the point; and I submit the foregoing for consideration.

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But for our lessons to our classes: where is the application? I suggest this: "What went ye out to see or hear?" Why did you go to church last Sunday? To see your neighbours' dresses? or to hear a good preacher? Why have you come to Sunday-school to-day? To kill time? or to read God's word, and study it? But, if you went to hear the preacher, mark what his message was to yourself; if you have come here for Scripture study, be sure you don't miss its word for your own soul.

BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Review briefly the history and work of John the Baptist... Relate the circumstances leading to his imprisonment... Draw a map of the land of Palestine with its provinces, and locate Capernaum and Machærus... The purpose of John's message... The answer of Christ, and what it showed... The testimony of Christ to John... The character of John as here presented... Lessons concerning doubts: (1) How they arise; (2) How they should be met; (3) The best answer to them... Illustrate John's condition of mind by an event in Elijah's history... Duties suggested by the lesson; (1) Not to be dismayed by doubts; (2) To bear our doubts to Christ; (3) Firmness in God's service; (4) Self-denial; (5) Boldness in testimony; (6) To realize our privileges... Wherein our privileges are greater than John's.

References. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA OF PROSE ILLUSTRATIONS: Vol. I. 3626, 3627, 4600. Vol. II. 10281, 11117, 11128. POETICAL: Vol. I. 396. Vol. II. 3632, 3633. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK: The messenger sent before the king, 513.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, B.S.G.



Outline for a blackboard review, separate from the diagram—

Write the letters on the board, then ask the following questions, by letters, and write

the answers. First letter for place; second for persons; third and fourth for parallel passages. First D for date; second D for doings; third D for duties enjoined; fourth D for doctrine.

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Primary and Intermediate.

BY MRS. E. J. KNOWLES.

INTRODUCTORY REVIEW. A few Sundays ago we had a lesson about a very strange man who lived in the desert, and afterward preached to great crowds of people about their sins. What was his name? [Recall by questions John's ministry as taught in Lesson VII.] The Golden Text of to-day says something about John. Class repeat the text.

LESSON STORY. This man, so faithful in warning the people of their sins, made King Herod angry because he reproved him for something very wrong that Herod had done. The "burning and shining light" of John's reproof was more than the wicked heart of Herod could bear. We do not like to be told we are doing wrong. Should we be angry with our parents or teachers who reprove us? They do it for our good, to make us better. So God reproves sin in his word, and in our conscience, in order to bring us into a better life. I saw a little girl the other day who pouted her lips and frowned in a very cross way because her teacher told her she was naughty. Is this the right spirit? Herod was so angry with John that he put him in prison. His friends visited him sometimes, and told him of the wonderful miracles Jesus was doing through the country. But John, sitting alone in his prison, had many thoughts about Jesus. He began to wonder whether he really was the Saviour the world had so long been expecting. So people always question about Jesus when they do not know him in their heart. Any little child in my class, whose heart is truly given to the Lord, may know more about him than did this great prophet John. One day he sent two of his disciples to ask the Lord, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Jesus did not say, "Go and tell John that I am he," but he went right on with his blessed work, healing the sick, the blind, the lame. Then he told John's disciples to go back and tell him what they had seen and heard, and how the poor had the gospel preached to them. Was not that a good way to answer John?

How do we know the Gospel is true? By the good it does wherever it is received. [A few illustrations will show the contrast between Christian and heathen countries, especially in the homes of the children. Also the influence of a Church and of Christian people upon any community. Illustrate by the hospitals, the charities for children, summer excursions for poor children, seaside homes, etc., all the out-growth of the Gospel of Christ.]

How do we know in our own hearts that Jesus is truly the Saviour? By the power

he holds over our temper, our words, our choice of companions, and by the sweet peace with which he fills the heart. Do we show to others that the Gospel is true by what it does for us? "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."

LESSON THOUGHTS. 1. It is good for us to have our secret sins shown to us in the light of God's truth. 2. We know the Gospel is true by what it does for the world. 3. We know it best by what it does in our own hearts.

A. D. 27.

March 13.

LESSON XI.—THE SINNER'S FRIEND; or, Sins Forgiven.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Soon after the events of the last lesson, perhaps on the very day, Jesus received an invitation to dine at the house of a distinguished Pharisee, named Simon. The Saviour went, but was treated with scant courtesy—as a wayfarer, instead of an honoured guest. No water was brought to wash his feet from the dust of travel, no perfume was dropped upon his head, and no kiss of greeting was given by the master of the house. With studied neglect he was left to find a place among the couches around the table, while his every word and action were watched with suspicion. There came in, however, one whose ardour supplied the lack of attention, a poor, guilty, but penitent woman. She approached the couch where the Master was reclining, poured over his feet a flood of tears for her sinful past, and wiped them with her long, disheveled hair, and, breaking a box of costly perfume, she anointed them, and covered them with her kisses. The Pharisee looked on in silent scorn, wondering that the Master should suffer one so vile to approach him, in his secret heart doubting whether he could be a prophet and yet be ignorant of her character. The Lord read his inmost thought, and answered it in a parable, which was at once a commendation to the woman for her lowly, loving service, and a rebuke for his own neglect. Then, mindless of the frown from the assembled company, he pronounced her pardoned of her sins, and free to depart, with the peace of God upon her.

Luke 7. 36-50.

[Memory Verses, 47-50.]

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.

Luke 5, 32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Verse 36. One of the Pharisees. His name was Simon. Ver. 40. Some have thought that he was "Simon the leper" and that this was the anointing related in Matt. 26. 6-13. But it may be noted, 1. This occurred in the early part of Christ's ministry, while as yet the Pharisees were not his open enemies, and the other just at its close, six days before the passover, at a time when no Pharisee would have invited Christ to his house. 2. This occurred in Galilee, the other at Bethany, near Jerusalem. 3. This anointing was performed by an unnamed "woman which was a sinner," the other by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who is nowhere so spoken of. 4. In this case the murmur arose at Jesus' forgiving sins; in the other at the waste of the ointment. 5. Such events were likely to occur often, as feet-washing and anointing were a part of the customary civilities to guests. 6. That both occurred at a supper with a man named Simon was not remarkable, since the name was perhaps the most common one of all names among the Jews, there being nine different Simons mentioned in the New Testament. **Desired him.** The invitation may have been given either in a spirit of patronizing condescension, as if conferring a great privilege; or as a snare to lead Jesus into utterances which might be made a ground of accusation. **He went.** Though he knew the motive and anticipated the treatment he was to receive, yet he accepted the invitation. (1) A lesson for Christ's workers, to go wherever they find opportunity to do good, whatever the treatment they receive. **Sat down to meat.** Literally, "reclined." The foreign custom of reclining upon couches or divans had been introduced in Palestine, and the guests rested upon the left arm, with the head toward the table, and the feet outward from it, the table being arranged on the outside of a square, one side being left open that the servants might pass in and out with the food.

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38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Matt. 5. 4: Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 2 Cor. 7. 10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.

Luke 15. 1: Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. Matt. 11. 19: And they say, Behold... a friend of publicans and sinners! Matt. 21. 31: Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

Gal. 5. 3: For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Rom. 3. 23: All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 2. 12: As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?

Hosea 14. 4: I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from them. 1 John 4. 19: We love him because he first loved us. 2277.

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou

37. A woman... which was a sinner. Some have explained this as meaning no more than one who did not undertake to observe all the minute regulations of the Mosaic system, as then interpreted by the Pharisees; but it is more likely that she was literally "a sinner," one who was known to be of unchaste life. There is absolutely no reason for supposing that this was Mary Magdalene, as has been often taken for granted. **When she knew.** The evangelist says nothing as to her previous history or her knowledge of Christ; yet from her conduct it is evident that she must have heard and believed his Gospel, and repented of her sinful life. **Brought.** In the East it has always been customary for people to pass into feasts uninvited and unquestioned, and, sitting on the seats around the wall, engage freely in conversation with the guests. **Alabaster box.** A vessel for holding perfume, named from Alabastron in Egypt, where they were originally made from a peculiar kind of marble; in form generally resembling a bottle. **Ointment.** A perfume compounded of various ingredients, used generally upon the hair.

38. **Stood at his feet.** As Jesus reclined upon the couch, his feet would be toward the wall of the room, and bare, since the sandals were removed on entering the house. **To wash his feet with tears.** The words in the original show that she did not intentionally wash, but moistened his feet with her fast falling tears; then, seeing their condition, she dried them with her tresses, and kissing them in token of reverent affection, poured upon them the precious ointment. (2) Repentance may speak more eloquently in acts than in words.

39, 40. **The Pharisee... saw it.** In the cold eyes of men this was an unwarrantable and unbecoming act; but in God's sight pure and lovely. (3) So do the standards of the earth differ from those of heaven. **Spoke within himself.** In thought, not in uttered words. **If he were a prophet.** He had invited Jesus to his house that he might test his claims as a prophet and pass judgment upon them; and his whole conduct shows a spirit of supercilious patronage, as if Jesus were in some sense suing for his favour. **Would have known.** The discernment of spirit and knowledge of things hidden was ever regarded by the Jews as one evidence of a true prophet; and the Pharisee could not conceive that a holy person would permit the touch of one impure. (4) It is not the physical but the moral touch of the sinner which contaminates the character. **Jesus answering.** Answering the thought, and thereby showing his prophetic insight. (5) He who read man's mind on earth can read it still in heaven. **To say unto thee.** (6) Christ always speaks to the individual, never to men in the mass.

41, 42. **A certain creditor.** The creditor is the Lord God, to whom every man owes his all. **Two debtors.** In this case, the woman who was held guilty of many sins, and the Pharisee, whose life was comparatively moral. (7) All men stand in the same relation as sinners, though not in the same degree. **Five hundred pence... fifty.** One about seventy dollars, and the other seven. **Nothing to pay.** This is the condition of every sinner, both great and small. (8) The moral man is as helpless in the presence of his sin as the most iniquitous. "I acknowledge the debt, that is all I can do. O, cross the book, and draw the red lines of Christ's blood across the black lines of my sins."—*St. Augustine.* **Frankly forgave.** Freely, graciously remitted the debt. (9) So God pardons all who confess themselves sinners and sue for mercy. (10) Great sinners and small, moral and immoral, must pass through the same gate, and receive salvation on the same terms. **Love him most.** B. th ought to love with all their hearts, but which has the greater cause for gratitude?

43. **Simon answered.** Still unconscious that the parable contained any reference to himself. **I suppose.** The language

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!

No. 277, *New Hymn Book.*

C. M.

My God, my God, to thee I cry,
Thee only would I know;
Thy purifying blood apply,
And wash me white as snow.

Touch me, and make the leper clean,
Furge my iniquity;
Unless thou wash my soul from sin,
I have no part in thee.

Behold, for me the Victim bleeds,
His wounds are opened wide;
For me the blood of sprinkling pleads,
And speaks me justified.

HOME READINGS.

- M.** The sinner's friend. Luke 7. 36-50.
Tu. A needed friend. Luke 18. 35-43.
W. A mighty friend. Matt. 8. 14-27.
Th. A protecting friend. John 10. 1-11.
F. A loving friend. John 15. 1-17.
S. A constant friend. Rom. 8. 31-39.
Sa. An eternal friend. Heb. 7. 15-28.

QUESTIONS ON THE OUTLINE.

- I. A Pharisee.** v. 36.
Who were the Pharisees?
What were their views and practices?
What was their attitude toward Christ?
What was the name of this Pharisee?
What did he do to Christ? What was his motive?
How did he treat Christ? v. 44-46.
What did this show?
- A Penitent.** v. 37, 38.
Who came to Jesus? What was her character?
How could she obtain admission to the house?
What did she do? What was her motive?
What similar event is recorded in John 12. 3?
What are the differences between the two events?
- A Parable.** v. 39-46.
What was the Pharisee's opinion of Jesus?
Wherein was his opinion right, and wherein wrong?
How did Christ show him that he was a true prophet?
What parable did he relate? What was his application?
How did it show Simon's heart?
- A Pardon.** v. 47-50.
Who received pardon?
On what ground was it bestowed?
Was the woman forgiven because of her act toward Jesus?
What did her act show?
What did Christ say obtained her forgiveness?
What was the thought of those present, and what spirit did it reveal?

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Wherein does this lesson show—

1. Who may come to Christ?
2. What may we receive from Christ?
3. How we should treat Christ?

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—Justification by faith.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who came to Jesus while he was at the table of a Pharisee? A woman who was a sinner.
2. What did her act show? She washed and anointed his feet.
3. What did her act show? Sorrow for sin and love to Christ.

4. What did Jesus say to her? "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

5. What did he say had gained for her salvation? Her faith.

6. What duty are we taught in the eleventh lesson? Gratitude for our pardon.

WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

1. Open not only your home, but your heart to Christ. 2. Show a true sorrow for all your sins. 3. Love your Saviour, because he forgives you. 4. Be kind in your thoughts of others.

ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**Four Relations of Christ to Men.****I. CHRIST AS A GUEST.**

1. Desired that he would eat with him. v. 36.
"I will come in . . . sup with him." Rev. 3. 20.
2. Went into . . . house . . . sat down. v. 36.
"Blessed . . . Supper of the Lamb." Rev. 19. 9.

II. CHRIST AS A FRIEND.

1. A woman which was a sinner. v. 37.
"Not righteous but sinners to repentance." Luke 5. 32.
2. Brought an alabaster-box of ointment. v. 37.
"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." Psal. 51. 17.
3. Kissed his feet and anointed them. v. 38.
"He that humbleth himself . . . exalted." Luke 14. 11.

III. CHRIST AS A TEACHER.

1. A certain creditor . . . two debtors. v. 41.
"My sin is ever before me." Psal. 51. 3.
2. Frankly forgave them both. v. 42.
"Justified freely by his grace." Rom. 3. 24.

IV. CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR.

1. Her sins . . . many, are forgiven. v. 47.
"Blessed . . . whose transgression is forgiven." Psal. 32. 1.
2. Thy faith hath saved thee. v. 50.
"Justified by faith . . . peace with God." Rom. 5. 1.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**The Forgiveness of Sins.**

1. The forgiveness of sins is needed by all men, by the honorable as well as by the base. v. 41.
2. The forgiveness of sins may be needed in varying measure according to different degrees of guilt. v. 41.
3. The forgiveness of sins is freely bestowed by the abundant grace of God. v. 42.
4. The forgiveness of sins requires as its sole condition the earnest, humble turning of the heart to God. v. 44.

5. The forgiveness of sins may receive the direct and personal testimony of Christ. v. 48.

6. The forgiveness of sins can be bestowed only by the Lord God in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. v. 49.

7. The forgiveness of sins is gained by sincere faith in Christ. v. 50.

8. The forgiveness of sins brings as its result peace to the heart. v. 50.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

SEC. 8.—OF THE WORD OF GOD, AND PRAYER.

1. *In what is the word of God contained?*

The word of God is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

It is related of Grotius, the great Dutch theologian and writer on international law, that, being overtaken by mortal illness at Rostock in Germany, while on his way to Sweden, he was visited by a Lutheran pastor named Quistorp, who faithfully put before the dying man the guilt of his sins, and pointed him to the one only Saviour, and then told him the story of the publican in the temple, who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Raising his voice, Grotius exclaimed, "I am that publican!" and, falling back, immediately expired.

This anecdote exactly illustrates what should be the purpose of the Sunday-school teacher in a lesson like the one now before us. Sometimes we feel we have done our work well if we have merely aroused in the minds of our scholars a lively interest in some Bible narrative; sometimes, if we have succeeded in getting them to grasp our explanation of some important doctrine; sometimes, if we have secured their avowed assent to some duty on which we have been enlarging. But when we come to a lesson like this, the title of which is "The Sinner's Friend," and the subject of which is a sinner's forgiveness, we feel that our object in teaching must be not one whit short of this—to bring some young soul to say, not perhaps openly, but at all events in its inmost recesses, "I am that sinner!"

It is the more necessary to lay stress upon this in the present case, because we have one of the most picturesque scenes in the New Testament to describe, and are very liable to be led into taking up all the time with the externals of the narrative. If proper self-restraint is exercised, however, the very details which might crowd out the spiritual teachings of the lesson may be a real help in putting them forward, and also in securing attention for what in itself is not a popular topic.

But some teacher may ask, Am I really to try and persuade my scholars, many of them young and innocent, that they are like that poor "woman that was a sinner?" Is it really reasonable to expect any one of them to take up the expression of the dying Grotius, "I am that sinner?"

I reply, most certainly not. But is the woman the only sinner in the narrative? In the middle of the passage we find a parable, spoken by Jesus to his Pharisee host. In that parable he speaks of two debtors. Who was the other one? Was it not Simon himself?

Well, then, rejoins my critic, Am I to tell the scholars they are like that cold, proud, self-righteous Pharisee, who denied Jesus the commonest civilities of hospitality?

Again I say, Certainly not. The purpose of the lesson is this: to show that wherever there is a sinner, whether he knows himself to be one or not, whether he owes "five hundred pence" or "fifty," or five thousand, or five, that is the sinner whom the great Creditor is ready frankly to forgive. That is to say, if there were only one sinner in the whole world, for him Jesus Christ would have laid down his life. And then, that the scholar should be brought to the conviction, so beautifully expressed in Miss Hankey's "Old, Old Story"—

"Remember I'm the sinner
Whom Jesus came to save."

But now let me offer a few suggestions as to the exposition of the passage itself. We may begin by exhibiting in it two ways of treating Christ. This will introduce the details of the scene.

1. *The Pharisee's Way.*

Certainly he did not treat Jesus as the other Pharisees did. He did not "take counsel to slay him." It was something that he should invite the Nazarene teacher to a feast. But what happened when the hour arrived? Guest after guest enters the house; as each one comes, the host steps forward and embraces him according to the custom of the time and the country; upon each one slaves attend, with water to wash away the dust from his sandaled feet, with oil to pour over his head and soften the skin parched and dried up by the Eastern sun. Presently Jesus arrives: where is Simon's kiss? where are the slaves? where the water and the oil? No, it is condescension enough to invite him—no occasion to offer a man of his class attentions suitable enough for the rich and noble. And so, hot and dusty, Jesus takes his place at table—the lowest seat, no doubt.

The repast goes forward. Neighbors, and even strangers, come in and stand round the

room watching the reclining guests, the busy slaves, the numerous dishes, the flowing wine. Must they not observe how different one of those invited looks from the rest? His feet and theirs are stretched on the couches outward, and all can see which have enjoyed the luxury of fresh water and sweet oil, and which have not.

2. *The Woman's Way.*

She has come in too—what for? Is it not to see and hear him? Not for the first time, we may be sure of that. We cannot doubt that she has already felt the power of his words, perhaps of those great words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour," etc., which seem to have been spoken a little time before—and has repented of her sin, and now only longs to show her love to her Deliverer. But what can she do, vile and unworthy as she is?

Her quick eye perceives her opportunity. No slave has been attending upon him—she will be the slave? Her precious ointment is soon fetched, and she is on her knees at her menial task (so it was counted) before them all. But her sins, she cannot forget them—will he accept this service? will he not spurn her from him? Her tears burst forth and stream over the sacred feet; and then even her long hair, hitherto her adornment and her pride, is used to perform the slave's office.

3. Now what was at the root of this great difference in the treatment of Jesus by Simon and the poor penitent?

(a) In ver. 47 Jesus himself tells us. "Loved much," "loveth little." She loved him, and therefore she thought nothing too good for him. Simon cared little for him, or not at all, and so thought anything good enough for him.

(b) But why such a difference in their feelings toward Jesus? In the parallel he told Simon, why was one debtor more grateful than the other? Jesus himself could see that—"I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." It was her sense of sin that called forth her love.

(c) But yet again. Simon might say, "Suppose the woman is penitent, why go to this Nazarene? Does he mean that he is the creditor, and can forgive her sins?" Exactly so; and as her love proceeded from penitence, her penitence proceeded from faith. She believed Jesus had the right to forgive, and would forgive—and her faith "saved her." Ver. 50.

Take this *a, b, c*, backward. The woman (c) had faith in Jesus as the Saviour; (b) felt her sins, and so loved him who forgave them; (a) sought opportunity to show her love. The Pharisee (c) had no faith in Jesus; (b) had no feeling of sin, and so no

special reason for loving Jesus; (a) showed his lack of love in his treatment of Jesus.

In some such way as this, the details of this striking scene may be made to illustrate most solemn and important truths. And the application may be, Which is our way of treating Christ? Do we neglect him? or do we dedicate our all to him? And the answers to these questions really depends upon whether we can say, "I am that publican," I am that sinner!"

But let us be particularly careful that in setting forth Christ as the sinner's Friend, we show that he is the Friend of all sinners. The parable spoken at the Pharisee's table most significantly and tenderly intimates this. "He frankly forgave them both." Yes, he would forgive Simon too, if he would let him. But one condition was necessary: "When they had nothing to pay"—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Only when we come to him in the spirit of these words, whether we are "good or bad," "religious," or "irreligious," can he say to us, "Thy sins are forgiven thee: go in peace."

The Friend of sinners. Jesus once spoke of laying down his life for his friends, (John 15. 13,) and then went on, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you." But that is exactly what we have not done. So, how blessed is the assurance, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5. 8. Yes, he is the sinner's Friend.

BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Show who the Pharisees were, and their attitude towards Christ. . . . The conduct of this Pharisee, and what it showed—(1) Pride; (2) Self-righteousness; (3) Neglect of Christ; (4) Contempt for fellow-sinners. . . . The conduct of the woman, a word-picture. . . . Explain the "manners and customs" permitting this conduct. . . . What the woman showed—(1) True sorrow for sin; (2) Earnest seeking after Christ; (3) Humility; (4) Gratitude; (5) Love. . . . What she obtained from Christ—(1) Acceptance; (2) Commendation; (3) Forgiveness; (4) Peace; . . . Wherein does this teach—(1) How to treat Christ; (2) How to come to Christ; (3) How to treat others. . . . Illustrations. A story of Martin Luther. Once Satan appeared with a long roll of parchment written "Luther's sins," and demanded Luther to come with him. He wrote across the roll, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseeth," etc., the sins were cancelled, and Satan took

flight.... A poor woman wanted to buy some flowers of a child from a conservatory. He gave her some, saying, "My father is a king, and gives freely, but he drives no bargains."... A ransomed slave, who spent his life in working for the one who had bought him, said, "He redeemed me."

References. FOSTER'S PROSE: Vol. I. 1383, 1385, 4208. Vol. II. 7549, 9217, 10888. POETICAL: Vol. I. 741. Vol. II. 3322, 3321. FREEMAN: Alabastra, 712; Ointment, 712; Reclining at meals, 712; Kissing the feet; 765; Washing the feet, 10; Anointing guests, 429.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



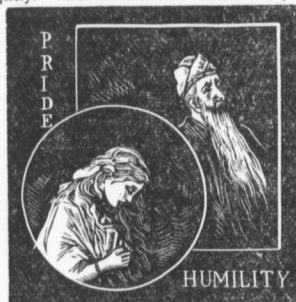
Primary and Intermediate.

BY H. J. K.

REVIEW. Recall John the Baptist in prison. Why was he there? Call to mind Herod's proud and angry spirit when re-proved for sin.

LESSON STORY. Our lesson to-day speaks of a person with a very different spirit from that of Herod. It tells of a woman who was a great sinner, but who was very sorry for her sins. What is printed upon the blackboard? Read with me, **JESUS, THE SINNER'S FRIEND.** I will tell you how this woman, so sinful, came to Jesus, and what he did for her. Jesus was one day invited to dine with a man named Simon, a Pharisee. [A picture of the Eastern style of reclining upon couches may be shown, or teacher may give a brief word-picture of the scene.] While he was lying thus upon the couch at table, a woman, who was known in the city as a great sinner, came into the room, and stood at the feet of Jesus. She had heard about his kindness to all who came to him. It may be she had heard him say some of the tender, loving words he was saying every day to the poor people who thronged around him. She had thought nobody in the world cared for her, she was so very, very sinful. Yet she hoped Jesus would care, for he was so wonderfully kind! Do you know anybody who thinks no one

cares for them? Be like Jesus, and speak kindly to them. A loving word may help them into a better life. As this woman stood there, the thought that her sin must have grieved the Lord, filled her with sorrow. The great tears fell over her face and dropped upon his feet. She took the long hair that covered her shoulders, and wiped his feet very tenderly—those blessed feet, dear children, that were afterward pierced upon the cross for your sins and mine! Then she opened a white box of ointment, and bathed his feet with the precious oil. The man who had invited Jesus to dine was not pleased to have this woman come into his house. He said to himself, "This man is not a prophet, else he would know what sort of a woman this is, and would not let her touch him." Simon did not understand that Jesus is the sinner's Friend, else he would not have thought that. Jesus read his thoughts, and told him this story. A certain man had two debtors. One owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty, and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Which of them would love him most? [Draw out answers to this question from the class. A little friend of mine broke a very handsome vase belonging to a lady. She could not replace it; she could only say she was very sorry. The lady frankly forgave her, and ever after the little girl loved that lady very dearly, and was ready to do any thing for her.] Simon answered, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most." Jesus said, "You have answered rightly." Then he turned to the woman, and



said to Simon, "See this woman. I came into your house and you gave me no water for my feet; she washed them with her tears. You gave me no kiss of welcome; she loves even to kiss my feet. She does all this because, although her sins are many, they are all forgiven, and she loves me. You forgot to do it, because your sins are not forgiven, and you have no love for me."

Then he made the woman's heart very glad by turning to her and saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

LESSON THOUGHTS. 1. We are debtors to God because we have broken his law through sin. 2. Our sinful nature cannot pay the debt. 3. If we come to Jesus with truly penitent hearts, God will forgive us for Jesus' sake. 4. The forgiven heart is full of love for Jesus. 5. This love shows itself in what we do for him. 6. The more we love him, the more sorry we feel for having grieved him by our sin.

OUTLINE BLACKBOARD EXERCISE.

- I owe.....What?
- I cannot pay.....Why?
- A friend in need.....Who?
- His promise.....What?
- My faith.....Why?
- My pardon.....How?

The above outline may be written on the blackboard, and, as a subject for study or review, our debts to God, and how they are paid.

March 20.

FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Zacharias and Elisabeth. Luke 1. 5-17.
- Tu. The songs of Mary and Zacharias. Luke 1. 46-55, 67-79.
- W. The shepherds and Simeon. Luke 2. 8-20, 25-35.
- Th. The boyhood of Jesus. Luke 2. 40-52.
- F. The preaching of Jesus and John. Luke 3. 7-18; 4. 14-21.
- S. Christ's miracles and testimony. Luke 5. 12-26; 7. 19-28.
- B. The sinner's friend. Luke 7. 36-50.

GOLDEN TEXT.

There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4. 12.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 139, *New Hymn Book.* C. M.

Hark! the glad sound, the Saviour comes!
The Saviour promised long;
Let every heart exult with joy,
And every voice his song!
He comes! from darkening scales of vice
To clear the inward sight;
And on the eyeballs of the blind
To pour celestial light.
He comes! the broken hearts to bind,
The bleeding souls to cure;
And with the treasures of his grace
To enrich the humble poor.

No. 108, *New Hymn Book.* C. M.

All hail the power of Jesus' name;
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.
Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all.
O that with yonder sacred throng
We at his feet may fall;
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all!

No. 109, *New Hymn Book.* C. M.

O that the world might taste and see
The riches of his grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.
His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, "Behold the Lamb!"
Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his Name;
Preach him to all, and cry in death,
"Behold, behold the Lamb!"

REVIEW SCHEME.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE STUDENT.—1. Read over the lessons of the past quarter during the week. 2. Recall the Topical Titles and main points of each lesson. 3. Study carefully the Lesson Catechism on each lesson. 4. Give attention to the Teachings of each lesson, and notice their application. 5. Prepare answers to the questions given below.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE CONDUCTOR.—1. Prepare the review in advance, and know just what you are going to do. 2. Drill the school from week to week through the quarter on the points which you propose to review at the end of the quarter. 3. If the review be conducted by the superintendent, the initial letters of names, etc., may be written upon the blackboard as a hint to the scholars. 4. Do not undertake too extensive a review. Select only as much as can be taught in the allotted time. 5. Do not dwell too long on each section. 6. Make the review pointed, practical, and spiritual.

I. Give the Topical Title, Outline, and Golden Text of each lesson in the quarter.

II. State the Doctrinal Suggestion of each lesson, and define each doctrine.

III. State an element of character which is illustrated by each of the following Persons:—Zacharias, Mary, the Shepherds, Simeon, John the Baptist, the Pharisees, a leper, a penitent.

IV. What Traits and Characters of Christ do we find exhibited in the following events? as a child in the temple; preaching in the synagogue; healing the leper; forgiving sins; bearing testimony to John; at the Pharisee's table?

V. Where in these lessons are we taught the following Duties: 1. To look for Christ; 2. To welcome Christ; 3. To seek Christ; 4. To believe in Christ; 5. To be grateful to Christ; 6. To tell others about Christ?

VI. Name the persons connected with these lessons and a fact concerning each: Za., El., Ma., Jesus, St., Jos., Jo., Sim.

VII. Tell the story connected with the following events:

1. A vision in the temple.
2. A visit to a manger at midnight.
3. An old man holding an infant in his arms.
4. A boy sitting among learned men.
5. A bold preacher standing by the river.
6. A great teacher in the home of his childhood.
7. A sick man let down through the roof.
8. Messengers from a prophet in prison.
9. A woman weeping over the feet of a guest at table.

VIII. Tell where in these lessons we are taught—

1. To rejoice that Christ has come.
2. To read what Scripture says about him.
3. To seek him promptly and earnestly.
4. To tell him our troubles and needs.
5. To believe in him with all our hearts.
6. To praise him for his forgiving grace.

Review in the Primary Class.

BY M. V. M.

Little children love to tell what they know, and if, during the quarter, the review of the previous lesson has been one of the stated exercises, the class will be ready for the work of this day, and will enjoy it, too.

The Leaf Cluster is an excellent help on Review Sunday. The picture recalls the lesson, and a few questions will lead back to the truth taught. If we are not furnished with this attractive help, a symbol for each lesson drawn upon the board, or cut from paper and pinned up, will prove helpful in fixing the attention and in stimulating thought. Around these symbols cluster a few large letters, initials of prominent characters or places, and a leading word to suggest Golden or Tiny Text, and there is no fear but you will hold the eyes and ears of the children.

For this review let us print the single word "Jesus," in large letters, at the top of the board. Talk a little about the "precious name," and lead class to tell why it is so dear. We have had eleven lessons about Jesus, and each one tells us some sweet truth about him. Before we go back and gather these pearls of truth, let us all sing, "There is no name so sweet on earth," etc. Show picture, or symbol, to recall the first lesson, or make word picture, asking the children to close their eyes, and then ask for names and events. Who sent the angel? Who were the two old people? What was promised them? What was the child to be? For whose coming was he to make ready?

We need to be careful lest we give too much time to the first lessons, and find ourselves and class hurried before we get through. We can ask but few questions on each lesson, and these must be rapid, varied, and interspersed with bits of singing, showing of pictures, anything that will hold the interest and direct thought.

A review needs as careful preparation as any lesson, and is quite as important. If, in addition to our weekly review, we should

REVIEW SERVICE FOR

Leader. In what book of the Bible are the lessons of the past quarter?

School. In the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

Leader. What is the meaning of the word Gospel?

School. It means "good news."

Leader. Who was Luke, the writer of this book?

School. He was a Syrian, born at Antioch, and educated as a physician; he became the friend and companion of St. Paul.

Leader. When and where was this Gospel written?

School. Probably at Cesarea, about the year A. D. 60.

also take a little time at the end of each month for a few questions upon the lessons of the month, it would aid us by aiding the children. It is possible to make even little children enjoy Review Sunday, and look forward to it as a time when they can help along in a special sense.

Blackboard.

BY J. D. PHIPPS, Bsq.



The above diagram is intended to illustrate this thought: There have been eleven lesson hours this quarter, in all of which Jesus Christ has been the central figure. The question for teachers is, Have I pointed each hour to Jesus Christ? One hour left blank makes the name incomplete. Did I neglect any one of the opportunities? The question for scholars is, Have I neglected any one hour to know more of that name of which "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved?"

An analytical review may be given by using the outline given with Lesson 10.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

2. How are we to use the word of God to our benefit?

We are to use the word of God to our benefit by frequently and seriously reading and hearing it, with prayer to God that his Holy Spirit may show us its meaning, and apply it to our hearts.

John 5. 39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. Romans 10. 17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

THE FIRST QUARTER.

QUARTERLY LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes,

The Saviour promised long;

Let every heart prepare a throne,

And every voice a song.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,

The wounded soul to cure,

And, with the treasures of his grace,

To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,

Thy welcome shall proclaim;

And heaven's eternal arches ring

With thy beloved name.

Leader. Lesson First: ZACHARIAS AND ELISABETH.

Bible Class. We here see the first step toward

the revelation of God in Christ Jesus; the birth of his herald is foretold by the angel Gabriel.

School. Golden Text: And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Boys. There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they had no child. And it came to pass that, while he executed the priest's office before God, there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord: and the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John: he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Girls. Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

Leader. Lesson Second: THE SONG OF MARY.

Bible Class. The same messenger that was sent to Zacharias announces to Mary the coming birth of Jesus; we hear her song of rejoicing.

School. Golden Text: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Boys. And Mary said, Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed: for he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. His mercy is on them that fear him; he hath exalted them of low degree; he hath filled the hungry with good things. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed, forever.

Girls. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom.

Leader. Lesson Third: THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS.

Bible Class. At the birth of John, Zacharias is inspired to a joyful prophecy of the blessings coming to mankind in the gift of Jesus Christ.

School. Golden Text: The Dayspring from on high hath visited us.

Boys. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited his people, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; that he would grant unto us, that we might serve him in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. The Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Girls. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Leader. Lesson Fourth: THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

Bible Class. We hear how the gladness of heaven at the birth of Jesus overflowed into a song of praise.

School. Golden Text: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

Boys. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

Girls. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: Shout, O ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains. O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel! Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Leader. Lesson Fifth: SIMON AND THE CHILD JESUS.

Bible Class. The aged and holy Simeon is given the privilege of recognizing and taking in his arms the world's Redeemer.

School. Golden Text: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

Boys. There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon: and the same man was just and devout. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salva-

tion, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Girls. Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Leader. Lesson Sixth: THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

Bible Class. We are shown in this lesson that Jesus was entirely human, by the fact of his growing and learning, just as we all do.

School. Golden Text: And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

Boys. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Girls. I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done. Search the Scriptures. Seek those things which are above. Be instant in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

SINGING BY THE SCHOOL. C. M.

By cool Siloam's shady rill
How sweet the lily grows!
How sweet the breath beneath the hill,
Of Sharon's dewy rose.
O Thou, whose infant feet were found
Within thy Father's shrine,
Whose years, with changeless virtue crowned,
Were all alike divine:
Dependent on thy bounteous breath,
We seek thy grace alone,
In childhood, manhood, age, and death,
To keep us still thine own.

Leader. Lesson Seventh: THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Bible Class. John's mission was to arouse the people from sin and indifference, and to prepare their hearts to receive the good seed of Christ's word.

School. Golden Text: Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.

Boys. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? And all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Girls. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.

Leader. Lesson Eight: THE PREACHING OF JESUS.

Bible Class. We see Jesus as a preacher: his texts were from the Bible, which he explained and applied as no other preacher ever did.

School. Golden Text: He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.

Boys. And Jesus returned to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went in to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he began to say unto them, This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Girls. And the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Never man spake like this man. He whom God sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure upon him. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Leader. Lesson Ninth: CHRIST HEALING THE SICK.

Bible Class. The words of Jesus were not only healing to the soul, but they brought strength and life to the body, as this lesson shows us.

School. Golden Text: The power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Boys. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy, and let him down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst before Jesus. And he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Girls. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and he healed them. We have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. And with his stripes we are healed.

Leader. Lesson Tenth: WITNESS OF JESUS TO JOHN.

Bible Class. Jesus is full of sympathy and appreciation for his servants; he testified to John's character, and so he has promised to confess all his disciples before his Father and the holy angels.

School. Golden Text: He was a burning and a shining light.

Boys. And John sent to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. Among those that are borne of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.

Girls. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.

Leader. Lesson Eleventh: THE SINNER'S FRIEND.

Bible Class. Jesus is here shown to us as rebuking sin, forgiving sin, and reclaiming from sin.

School. Golden Text: He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

25 Copies of this Review may be obtained of Wm. Briggs, Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto, at the rate of Fifty Cents per hundred, or Six Cents per dozen.

Boys. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Girls. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. They which be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

SINGING BY THE SCHOOL. L. M.

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am—thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Leader. What is the Golden Text for the quarter?

School. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

A. D. 28.

Missionary Lesson.

March 27

PREACHING THE KINGDOM; or, Sent to Preach.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The hour has now come for a more general proclamation of the Gospel kingdom, with Jesus Christ as its king. Twice Jesus has passed through the principal cities of Galilee preaching his Gospel, and he has now commenced a third journey. The interest of the people has been awakened so widely and so deeply that one voice will not suffice to reach the masses which hunger for the word, and preachers are needed to satisfy the call from many places. The twelve disciples, already chosen, who have been for some months listening to the teachings of the Master, are sent forth to meet this growing demand. He gives them their commission, not as yet to the Gentile peoples around, nor to the Samaritans their neighbours, since they were not now fitted for this higher stage of the Gospel, and its premature announcement would alienate the Israelites, who must first be won, that they in due time might bear it to the world. As the credentials of their message, he bestows upon his workers his own power to heal diseases with a touch, and to cast out demons in his name. He bids them make no provision for their journey, but go in the common garb of toil, and trust for their support to the people among whom they laboured.

Luke 9. 1-6.

[Memory Verses, 3, 4.]

1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 1. He called. The commission here related was not the general command to preach the Gospel to all nations, which was not given until after Christ's resurrection, but a temporary and special mission to the Jews only; for the disciples themselves were not yet educated up to the truth of Gentile salvation, and its announcement would at once alienate the entire people.

John 14. 12: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do. Acts 2. 43: And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. Heb. 2. 4: God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles. Acts 5. 16: There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Mark 16. 20: And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them. 1 Cor. 1. 21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Rom. 10. 15: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!

3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

1 Pet. 5. 7: For [God] careth for you. 1 Cor. 9. 11, 14: If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

Acts 10. 32: Peter... is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the seaside. Acts 16. 14, 15: Lydia when she was baptized... besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.

1. God's great plans for the world are progressive, and advance by stages as men are ready to receive them. The purposes of this commission were, (1) To meet the growing demands of the people for instruction, as Christ could be in but one place at a time. (2) To counteract the schemes of the Pharisees, who were daily becoming more pronounced in their opposition. (3) To train the apostles themselves for their coming work of preaching the Gospel to the world. **Twelve disciples.** For their names see Matt. 10. 2-4; Mark 3. 16-19; and Luke 6. 14-16. The number was probably suggested by the twelve tribes of Israel, and was a suitable one for their work; the persons were chosen from among those who had avowed themselves his followers, and who in his infinite wisdom he saw were best qualified for his work; and their office was to receive instruction directly from Christ, to bear testimony to the facts of his life and the truths of his Gospel, and to be the founders of his Church. They left no successors in their office, which was not intended to be permanent. **Over all devils.** There seems but one way to understand this expression: that evil spirits did possess and dwell within human bodies, and that Christ gave to his apostles power to cast them out. **Cure diseases.** These were to be the tokens of their divine authority. People would believe in their right to deliver God's message, when they saw their mighty work. Such miracles are no longer needed, now that the Gospel has become firmly established, and men can see its results.

2. He sent them. The word apostle means "one sent." To preach the kingdom. They were not to explain the precise plan of the kingdom, for that they knew only obscurely, perhaps knew not at all, until after the resurrection and ascension; but they were to awaken the attention of the people to the fact that it was close at hand, and prepare them for the clearer instructions that should follow. 2. The preacher's first effort should be to arouse the attention of the people to divine things. **To heal the sick.** Both as the proof of their divine commission, from compassion, and because the bodily healing was in a sense typical of the spiritual restoration which they proclaimed. 3. Christ comes to bring blessing to all who are in need.

3. Take nothing. Their journey was not long—but to the neighbouring villages, not over two days' travel in distance; they were to win the hearts of the people by casting themselves upon their generosity; and they were thus to attest their faith in God, as well as to show themselves successors in spirit to the old prophets. **Neither staves.** They were not even to provide a staff for their journey, though if they already possessed one, they might take it. Mark 6. 8. **Nor scrip.** A leather bag for food, generally slung over the shoulder, such as is now worn by Syrian shepherds. **Neither bread.** The bread of the people in Christ's land and time was thin, hard cakes, generally made of barley. **Neither money.** "Nor silver." Both in respect to food and lodging they were to depend upon the people among whom they sojourned. **Neither have two coats.** "Two tunics." The tunic was the undergarment, somewhat resembling a shirt. Sometimes people of wealth wore two of these garments of different materials. The apostles were to be dressed not as priests nor men of rank, but as common people, to which class they belonged. These instructions were suited to the mildness of the climate, the simplicity of manners in that age and land, and to the temporary nature of their mission. These are not to be taken as rules for the permanent government of the Church in all countries where the requirements of climate and the conditions of society are different, yet their spirit should be maintained. 4. The ministry should be of the Gospel, should be, (1) Self-denying. (2) Trusting in God. (3) Looking to the people for their support. (4) Not ostentatious in their manner of living. (5) Devoted to one work only.

5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Acts 14. 46; Paul and Barnabas ... said ... seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. Acts 18. 6; And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

6 And they departed, and went through the town, preaching the Gospel, and healing everywhere.

1 Thess. 2. 4: We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel. Rom. 15. 19; From Jerusalem, and round about unto Ilyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ.

4. **Whatsoever house ye enter.** Elsewhere (Matt. 10. 11) we find the command that they were to inquire in each village who was "worthy," and with such find a home during their stay. **There abide.** They were not to spend their time in social visiting, nor to visit from house to house, as that would delay them in their mission, but to remain at one place during the day or two spent at each village, and accept such hospitality as the plain habits of the common people afforded. 5. God's workers have little time for worldly pleasures. **Thence depart.** When they should leave the people for another field of labour.

5. **Will not receive you.** They would find the influences of the Pharisaical party against them, in some places stirring up strife and opposition. 6. Those who work for God must expect to meet adverse influences and difficult fields and hard hearts. [Teacher, do not be discouraged in your work because of its trials.] **Shake off the very dust.** Removing their sandals they were to shake off the dust from them. Such was the custom of the stricter Pharisees when they entered the borders of Judea, after passing through a heathen country. **As a testimony.** As if freeing themselves from all contact with them, and of participation in their condemnation, which was sure to follow their rejection of Christ's message.

6. **Went through the towns.** In Galilee and Judea, passing by the Samaritans in the centre of the land. **Preaching the Gospel.** "Proclaiming the glad tidings;" the news of the coming of the Saviour and the speedy establishment of his kingdom. 7. The gladdest news to men is the message of salvation, which ought to inspire rejoicing and not sadness. **Healing everywhere.** Doing their Master's work of blessing to both body and soul. Their mission lasted for only a few months, perhaps a few weeks, for soon after we find the twelve once more with their Master in his journeys.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He sent them to preach the kingdom of God. Luke 9. 2.

Time.—A. D. 28, in the second year of Christ's ministry, about eight months after Lesson XI.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 717, *New Hymn Book.*

L. M.

On all the earth thy Spirit shower;
The earth in righteousness renew;
Thy kingdom come, and hell's o'erpower,
And to thy sceptre all subdue.

Yea, let thy Spirit in every place
Its richer energy declare;
While lovely tempers, fruits of grace,
The kingdom of thy Christ prepare.

Grant this, O holy God and true!
The ancient seers thou didst inspire;
To us perform the promise due:
Descend and crown us now with fire!

o. 740, *New Hymn Book.*

7s.

Earth, rejoice, our Lord is King!
Sons of men, his praises sing!
Sing ye in triumphant strains,
Jesus the Messiah reigns!

Power is all to Jesus given,
Lord of hell, and earth, and heaven,
Every knee to him shall bow;
Satan, hear, and tremble now!

Angels and archangels join,
All triumphantly combine,
All in Jesus' praise agree,
Carrying on his victory.

No. 744, *New Hymn Book.*

7s & 6s.

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile;
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strewn:
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learnt Messiah's name.

HOME READING.

- M. Preaching the kingdom. Luke 9. 1-6.
Ta. The twelve apostles. Matt. 10. 1-15.
W. The charge to the twelve. Matt. 10. 16-31.
Ta. The reward of fidelity. Matt. 10. 32-42.
F. The preaching of the cross. 1 Cor. 1. 18-31.
S. The apostolic character. 2 Cor. 6. 11.
M. The apostolic charge. 2 Tim. 4. 1-3.

Place.—Galilee, where Jesus was upon his third tour of preaching.

Connecting Links.—1. The parables by the sea. Matt. 13. 2. The storm on the sea, and the visit to Gergesa. Luke 8. 22-39. 3. The healing of Jairus' daughter. Luke 8. 40-56. 4. Third tour of Galilee. Matt. 9. 35-38.

QUESTIONS ON THE OUTLINE.

1. **The Call, v. 1, 2.**
 - What event preceded the choice of the twelve? Luke 16. 12.
 - What name was given to these twelve? Luke 6. 13.
 - How did this title express their work?
 - What was the mission of the apostles at this time?
 - How did it differ from their mission afterward? Mark 16. 15.
 - What power was given to them?
 - For what purpose did they possess this power?
 - Why are not such gifts now bestowed in the Church?
 - What is the commission now given to the Church? Matt. 28. 19, 20.
 - What advantages for the work of the gospel do we enjoy over those of the apostles?
 - What responsibilities do these advantages place upon us?
 - Is the call to spread the gospel limited to the ministry?
 - What opportunities may people of the laity enjoy for the work of the gospel?
2. **The Command, v. 3-6.**
 - What did Christ forbid his disciples to take for their journey?
 - Why was this command given?
 - What traits of character would such requirements tend to develop?
 - How would these requirements tend to give them favour among those to whom they preached?
 - How were they to find entertainment on their journey? Matt. 10. 11.
 - Why were they to abide in one house during their stay in a village?
 - What response should they make when their message was rejected?
 - How and when would this be "a testimony against them?"
 - What treatment were they to expect? Matt. 10. 17, 22.
 - What did the apostles do after receiving this charge?
 - What is here meant by "the gospel?"
 - What special truths of the gospel did they proclaim?
 - What was the aim of their preaching? Mark 6. 12.
 - What works proved their authority?

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

What is here taught concerning—

1. The duty of working for Christ?
2. The character of a worker for Christ?
3. The methods of working for Christ?

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The divine call to preach.

WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

1. Be one of Jesus' learners.
2. Try to tell others about Christ.
3. Obey faithfully all his commands.
4. Trust in him for all things.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Whom did Christ choose as his messengers to the people? The twelve apostles.
2. For what work did he send them forth? To preach the kingdom of God.
3. What did he command them? To take nothing for their journey.
4. How were they to show their authority? By working miracles.
5. To whom does Christ now expect his people to send the gospel? To all the world.

ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Missionary Spirit.

- I. A SPIRIT OF POWER.
 - Authority over... devils and to heal. v. 1.
 - "Satan as lightning fell from heaven." Luke 10. 18.
- II. A SPIRIT OF TESTIMONY.
 - To preach the kingdom of God. v. 2.
 - "We are witnesses of all things." Acts 10. 39.
- III. A SPIRIT OF MERCY.
 - To heal the sick. v. 2.
 - "A merciful and faithful high-priest." Heb. 2. 17.
- IV. A SPIRIT OF SELF-DENIAL.
 - Take nothing for your journey. v. 3.
 - "Be content with such things as ye have." Heb. 13. 5.
- V. A SPIRIT OF SINGLENESS IN AIM.
 - There abide and thence depart. v. 4.
 - "This one thing I do." Phil. 3. 13.
- VI. A SPIRIT OF FIDELITY.
 - Shake off the... dust from your feet. v. 5.
 - "To declare all the counsel of God." Acts 20. 27.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The Work of the Gospel.

1. The work of the Gospel is to be wrought by disciples, those who have enjoyed personal communion with Christ. v. 1.
2. The work of the Gospel is one of triumph over all the forces of evil, by the mightier power of God. v. 1.
3. The work of the Gospel is one of blessing both to the souls and the bodies of men. v. 2.
4. The work of the Gospel is mainly that of proclaiming Christ to man. v. 2.
5. The work of the Gospel requires self-denial and faith on the part of those who engage in it. v. 3.
6. The work of the Gospel recognizes the fact that some will reject the truth, despite all our efforts. v. 6.

BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Show concerning this lesson—(1) Its period in Christ's ministry; (2) Its purpose; (3) Its plan; (4) Its persons... Explain the temporary nature of this mission, and wherein it differs from the missionary work of the Church at the present time... Show what is here taught concerning, (1) Christ's work (see Additional Practical Lessons); (2) Concerning Christ's workers and their spirit (see Analytical and Biblical Outline)... Show what is the work which now de-

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References. FOSTER'S PROSE. Vol. I. 3988, 3991, 3994. Vol. II. 10586, 10588, 10603. POETICAL: Vol. I. 2322. Vol. II. 3335.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

PRINT, in large letters, with coloured crayons, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Talk about gifts, Christmas gifts, birthday gifts, etc. How many children here have at some time received a gift? Did it come from some one who did not know you or care for you? No: a gift, if it had a voice, would say, "I love you," and that is what makes it so precious. Shut your eyes while I print one word on the board. (Print "Christmas" in large letters.) What do we do at Christmas? "Get presents." "Give presents." Why? What is this day, upon which every body loves to give? "The birthday of Jesus." Who sent Jesus? God. Yes. Jesus is God's gift to us. "He gave his only begotten Son." We give to each other on Christmas day because God gave to us, and we want to show our love to him who has so loved us.

TO BE TAUGHT. (1) Who may give. (2) What we may give. (3) To whom we may give.

1. [Call two children to the desk, and ask one to give a book to the other.] Why cannot Jennie give Maggie a book? "She hasn't any." Yes, that is the reason. Now, I will give Jennie a book. Can she give it to Maggie? Yes, for now she has it to give. To whom has God given Jesus? To all. We should have nothing to give if God had not given to us, but now that he has given us a Saviour he wants us to give him to others.

2. Tell how Jesus gave when upon earth—life, health, happiness, new hearts. Then tell lesson story. Who were the disciples? Those who loved him and were learning from him. He sent them out to do good to others, as he had done to them. What are we in Sunday-school for? To learn about Jesus. Then we are disciples, too, and we may give to others what we have received from God. The Tiny Text says, "Preach the kingdom." To do that is to tell about Jesus, and all his disciples can do that, no matter how little they may be.

3. Talk about missionaries. Tell of some missionary who is preaching to people far away. We can help such missionaries to preach by giving our money and prayers. Explain how our money buys food and clothes for those who give their time to teaching the heathen. We should guard

against letting the children give their pennies without knowing the object. Tell about home missionaries—Christian people who carry the Gospel to those who are not Christians. Every child who knows and loves Jesus may be a little missionary to some one who does not know him?

CLOSING EXERCISE. Teach the text on the board, illustrating by some simple story, and try to fasten the truth that Jesus is the greatest and best gift, and that if we receive him we may give him to others.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Subject for review from the stand: How to give wings to the Gospel that it may fly over all the earth. 1. Our duty as workers. 2. Our character as workers. 3. Our method as workers.

Whisper Songs for March.

TENTH LESSON.

The child-like heart that humbly waits
To hear the Father's word,
And gladly runs to do his will—
That heart shall know the Lord.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

The heart of love, O give to me,
That at thy cross will fall,
And offer all my store to him
Who gave to me his all.

Lessons for April, 1881.

APRIL 3. Following Jesus; or, Fit for the Kingdom. Luke 9. 51-62.

APRIL 10. The Good Samaritan; or, Love thy Neighbour. Luke 10. 25-37.

APRIL 17. The Pharisees Reproved; or, Saying and Doing. Luke 11. 37-47.

APRIL 24. Covetousness; or, Worldly Lusts Reproved. Luke 12. 13-21.

THERE IS A BETTER WORLD.

Tune—"JERUSALEM."

Moderato.

There is a bet-ter world, they say, Oh, so bright! Oh, so bright!

Where sin and woe are done a - way, Oh, so bright! Oh, so bright!

And mu-sic fills the bal-my air, And angels with bright wings are there,

And harps of gold and mansions fair, Oh, so bright! Oh, so bright!

2 No clouds e'er pass along its sky,
Happy land.
No tear-drop glistens in the eye.
Happy land.
They drink the gushing streams of
grace,
And gaze upon the Saviour's face,
Whose brightness fills the holy place,
Happy land, happy land.

3 And wicked things, and beasts of prey,
Come not there;
And ruthless death, and fierce decay,
Come not there;
There all are holy, all are good;
But hearts unwashed in Jesu's blood,
And guilty sinners unrenewed,
Come not there, come not there.

4 But though we're sinners every one,
Jesus died.
And though our crown of peace is gone,
Jesus died.
We may be cleansed from every stain,
We may be crowned with bliss again,
And in that land of pleasure reign,
Jesus died, Jesus died.

5 Then parents, sisters, brothers, come,
Come away!
We long to reach our Father's home,
Come away!
O come, the time is slipping past,
And men and things are fleeting fast,
Our turn will surely come at last;
Come away, come away!