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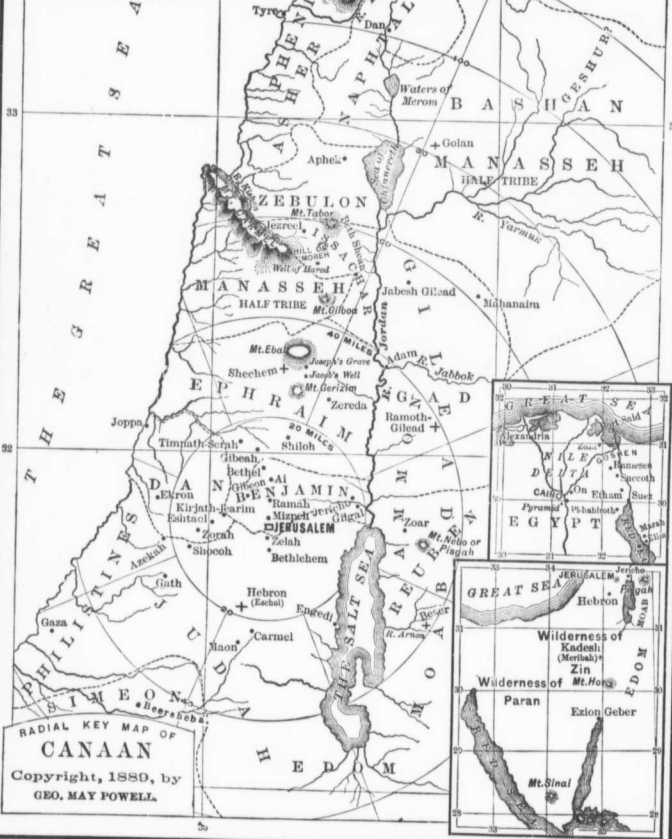
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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXXIV.

JANUARY, 1900.

No. 1.

## Hymn for New Year's Day.

BY THE REV. J. PASCOE.

On this glad day, this New Year's morn,  
To thee, my God, I offer praise,  
May now, on wings of mercy borne,  
To heaven ascend my grateful lays.

My praise to thee, my God, shall rise,  
As incense sweet, through graces given,  
To thee, my God, beyond the skies,  
To thee, supreme in earth and heaven.

Thee all the hosts of heaven adore,  
And bend and bow before thy throne,  
For thou wilt reign for evermore,  
As God from endless ages known.

Oh! may thy Gospel freely run  
Through every land and bless our race;  
May victories for thee be won,  
On every shore, in every place.

Let heathen nations learn of thee,  
And, coming to thy glorious light,  
May they thy great salvation see,  
Saved by thy wisdom, love and might.

This year may nations live in peace,  
And learn the art of war no more;  
Thy kingdom come, its power increase,  
Thy sceptre sway from shore to shore.

Thus may this year be ever known,  
As one to which to man was given,  
Abundant blessings from thy throne,  
Abundant grace direct from heaven.

Petitcodiac, N.B.

## Time.

The present is the centre of eternity.  
All time focalizes on to-day. Out of  
the root of the past has sprung the plant

of the present, and it, in turn, will produce the fruitage of the future. He who sighs for the former days or dreams of days to come, sins against to-day—yea, he sins against eternity. The past is gone; the future may not come to us in this earth life; we can claim only the present, and we must be prompt to use it, for it will not tarry for us, but ere we are aware it is numbered with the past. To-day is the heir of yesterday, and the testator of to-morrow.

There come moments in every life that are more important than whole days at other times. There occasionally comes a single instant that means more than all preceding years; an instant of crisis when you must settle some great, vital question affecting your whole future life, yes, and your eternal destiny; an instant in which you are called upon to sow the seed of an immeasurable harvest; an instant in which you may launch your boat upon a new sea of life, turning its prow toward a beautiful harbour of success and happiness. Act on the instant, and great is your reward. Let the moment slip by unheeded, neglect to act that instant, and your supreme opportunity in life is gone forever. It will not come back to-morrow. It will not return next year. Opportunities never receive orders from the Great Commander of Eternity, "Face about! March!" His one command, repeated unceasingly, is, "Forward, march! Double quick!"

Refuse to sow the seed at the critical moment when opportunity offers, and the harvest will be yours—never. Refuse to launch your bark when the new sea is at flood-tide, and your vessel, stranded high and dry for eternity, cannot bear you to the coveted haven of prosperity and joy.—The Angelus.



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**Sunday School Banner.**

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1900.

**A Happy New Year.**

"The old year is going; let him go." Turn we with new hopes and wills to the new year. Forgetting the things of the past, remembering only its lessons, "press toward the mark," better character, nobler achievement, greater usefulness; in short, a Christlike life, a truly happy new year. We all want it. How shall we obtain it? Not merely by making good resolutions the first day of the year, but by making them each day and keeping them. It is a good thing to make good resolutions—if they are kept. There can be no moral improvement without them. Luther's declaration that the way to hell is paved with good resolutions was not meant to keep people from making them, but as a warning against breaking them. The trouble with our New Year's Day resolutions is that they are not made for fulfillment in the future. Not the vows made to-day for to-morrow, but the vows

fulfilled each day, make our years blessed.

Our best pledge of a happy new year is in making the most of each passing day. Some one has pictured the days as coming to us with veiled faces, bearing the commonest of gifts in their hands, but when they have passed beyond recall the draped figures become radiant and the gifts we rejected seem to be treasures fit for kings' houses. No day is commonplace if we only had eyes to see its splendor. If our new year is to be beautiful, we must make all its days shine.

We cannot gain happiness by seeking it as an end or by making the pursuit of it the sole business of life. In this respect it is like some of the moral virtues; simplicity of character cannot be produced by thinking of it. The grace of humility cannot be won by constantly comparing ourselves with others, and cataloguing our deficiencies; the result is more likely to be inordinate self-conceit. So happiness eludes our grasp when we keep it continually in view and make it our chief object.

Happiness is not one of the prizes of exertion or ingenuity, and cannot be acquired by direct effort to gain it. It comes when we are not seeking or expecting it; when we are too preoccupied with high aims and useful work to think about it. "In life," says Humbolt, "it is worthy of special remark that when we are not too anxious about happiness and unhappiness, but devote ourselves to the strict, unsparing performance of duty, then happiness comes of itself—nay, even springs from the midst of a life of troubles, anxieties and privations."

Especially and certainly does happiness come without thought or search to those who live for others. Therefore, for every one of us the secret of a happy new year is in living to make others truly happy. So Christ has taught us by precept and example. He did not seek happiness for himself. "He went about doing good," alleviating the sorrows, healing the bodies and souls of men; and we know that he found divine joy in serving and blessing men. So we may make the new year one of special grace and joy to our souls by spending it in self-forgetful service of God and humanity.

Confidence in God's care is necessary to a happy new year. We can see all the way the Lord hath led us in the past year; but the future is wholly unknown

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The for th of the give sidera ings a Gospe order. object Matthe to sho foretol sixty-f ment t of the Israel. Mark writes on Chr of pow deeds claim a istering Luke special set for the lif many a satisfac Friend being f The Gr ness. the low noblest, and the bodies of Chris sympath is the d In him nation man of John first pur is the e tells of Logos b

to us. We know not what a day may bring forth, and no oracle or seer can tell what will be our changes, conflicts, achievements, in the year to come. But we know that we are safe in God's care, that no earthly disaster can touch the heart of that life which is hid with Christ in God.—Rev. C. H. Zimmerman, in S. S. Journal.

### Outlook for 1900.

The International Committee assigns for the next eighteen months the study of the life of Christ. The object is to give a thorough and systematic consideration of the life of Christ, his teachings and work, as drawn from all the Gospels and presented in chronological order. Each Evangelist had his own object in the writing of his Gospel. Matthew writes for the Jews, and aims to show that Jesus Christ is the Messiah foretold by the prophets. He quotes sixty-five passages from the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, the hope of Israel.

Mark, under the training of Peter, writes for the Roman world. He dwells on Christ as the Son of God, the Lord of power and kingship. He cites those deeds and words which establish this claim and manifest the divine power ministering to men.

Luke writes for the Gentile world, specially the Greeks. His object is to set forth the certainty of the things in the life of Christ, of whom there are many accounts, but not in all respects satisfactory. He portrays Jesus as the Friend and Saviour of men, his Gospel being for all men, both Jews and Greeks. The Greek had low ideas of sin and holiness. Luke shows Christ interested in the lowest and vilest as well as in the noblest, but declaring the vileness of sin and the beauty of holiness. "He embodies in his narrative those incidents of Christ's life which show his universal sympathy and world-wide interest." He is the divine Saviour, the universal man. In him God draws near to man of every nation and tongue, but he is also the man of men, the pattern of all.

John writes to all Christians. His first purpose is to show that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God. He tells of his eternal existence, of the Logos becoming flesh. His Gospel sup-

plements the other three, and clearly reveals the deity of Christ. The second purpose is that, believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, men might thus have life through his name.

It is necessary, for the right understanding of the four Gospels, to study, as we have been doing in past years, each Gospel by itself. If the student keeps the central thought well in mind, he will gain greatly in his appreciation of the divine revelation; he will understand much better the teachings of the evangelists. As he follows the distinct purposes of the four writers, he will discover that each one presents a necessary aspect of that marvellous life of Christ. He will discover, too, that each supplements the other, and all four are necessary to give the complete picture of Jesus Christ.

It will be seen that for such study the plan of the International Committee is a good one. The committee studies each Gospel consecutively. It is the business of the editors of lesson helps to bring out the definite purpose of the evangelist studied, and aid the teacher and scholar in seeing Christ as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wanted him to be seen.

For a complete picture of Christ we must study the four Gospels together, as they supplement one another. There is, of course, a central core of truth, around which they group their material. Each evangelist sets forth the incarnation of the Son of God. "With Matthew, Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us in fulfilment of prophecy; with Mark, he is the mighty worker, the Son of God in human form; with Luke, he is the Saviour of the world, the Son of God; with John, he is the eternal Word made flesh." All are busied with the life of the Son of God on earth in the form of man and subject to human conditions. This history is the central part of each Gospel. The death upon the cross occupies in each Gospel large space, and is described with the most painstaking fidelity. That death to them is paramount, for it is for sin, as each indicates in various ways by the incidents narrated and by the words of Christ himself. The resurrection is also common to all, for the risen Christ is proof that he is the Son of God, with power, and by his final teachings and promises, filling them with hope, gives them authority and power to proclaim him the Saviour of all men, and specially of them that believe.

Yet each evangelist has something which the others do not have. In order,

therefore, to give us a complete life of Christ, the lessons for eighteen months are upon the life of Christ, taken from all four Gospels and given in chronological order. We start with the birth of Jesus and follow him, step by step, until we part with him on the Mount of Olives, where his earthly ministry closed.

In late years the Christian world has been given life after life of Christ, in which devout men and sometimes rationalists have sought to set before us the marvellous Christ. These books have attracted widespread interest, and have been found intensely fascinating. But, after all, they are not, and cannot be, as profitable as to take the inspired words of the evangelists and study them so that the complete picture of Christ shall rise before us, so majestic, yet tender, so strong, yet lovely, so perfect, yet so inspiring.

It has been the fortune of many of us to see on the speaking canvas portraits of Jesus, where the artist has pictured him for us in one of the supreme moments of his life. Who can ever forget Durer's "Christ on the Cross;" or Hoffman's "Christ and the Young Man;" or "Christ the Consoler;" or "Christ before Pilate"? How marvellous have been the works of these masters of beauty! Yet in these months to come picture after picture of Christ will be given us. We will hear his words, mark his miracles, see his sufferings and death, and rejoice in his resurrection. Out of all should come to us from the four he chose by his Spirit and inspired to portray him a noble picture of him, greater than that which any artist ever painted.

He should become to us who believe more precious as Saviour, Teacher, Example, Friend and Lord. We should be able to make him precious to others and lead them to say in glad faith: "My Lord and My God." Surely the months that are coming promise to be rich in blessings to all devout students of the Word.—Augsburg Teacher.

### The Books of the Bible.

One vital requisite for Bible students is familiarity with the names, order, and grouping of the books of the Bible. As soon as children are old enough to read and memorize they should begin this essential study. The accompanying illustration, which may be used as a blackboard exercise, is because of its simplicity one of the best we have seen,

and we commend its wide use. Adults as well as Juniors find that the eye may

#### Old Testament.

##### Books of the Law



##### History Books.



##### Poetry Books.



##### Prophecy Books.



#### New Testament.

##### History Books.



##### Paul's Letters.



##### Other Letters



##### Prophecy Book.



be of great help to the memory, and this plain outlining, lettering, and grouping of the books is admirable.

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## A New Year's Hymn.

BY FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

"Certainly I will be with thee."—  
Exodus 3. 12.

"Certainly I will be with thee!" Father,  
I have found it true;  
To thy faithfulness and mercy I would set  
my seal anew.

All the year thy grace hath kept me,  
thou my help indeed hast been;  
Marvelous thy loving-kindness every day  
and hour is seen.

"Certainly I will be with thee!" Let me  
feel it, Saviour dear;  
Let me know that thou art with me, very  
precious, very near.  
On this day of solemn pausing, with thy-  
self all longing still,  
Let thy pardon, let thy presence, let thy  
peace my spirit fill.

"Certainly I will be with thee!" Blessed  
Spirit, come to me;  
Rest upon me, dwell within me, let my  
heart thy temple be.  
Through the trackless year before me,  
Holy One, with me abide;  
Teach me, comfort me, and calm me; be  
my ever present Guide.

"Certainly I will be with thee!" Starry  
promise in the night,  
All uncertainties, like shadows, flee away  
before its light.

"Certainly I will be with thee!" He hath  
spoken, I have heard;  
True of old and true this moment, I will  
trust Jehovah's word.

## Methodist Magazine and Review for December.

This number completes the fiftieth volume of this Magazine. It has nine illustrated articles, with Christmas stories, poems, etc. The announcement for 1900 is particularly attractive. An important series of illustrated articles, by Sir John Bourinot, on "Canada During the Victorian Era," will be of special interest. Illustrated articles are also announced on "England's Oldest Colony, Newfoundland;" "Canada-by-the-Sea;" "Growth of the Canadian Northwest;" "Evangeline's Country;" "Methodist Progress of a Hundred Years;" "Highways and Byways of Travel;" "Britain's Long Arm, the Royal Navy," and many other topics. Serial and short stories,

character studies and sketches, popular science articles, social and religious topics, missionary articles, world's progress, and other features of interest are announced. The November and December numbers will be given free to new subscribers.

Toronto: William Briggs. Montreal: C. W. Coates. Halifax: S. F. Huestis. \$2.00 a year; \$1.00 for six months.

## Book Notices.

A Year's Prayer-Meeting Talks. By Louis Albert Banks, D.D. 12mo, cloth, 297 pp. Price, \$1.00. New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

The prayer-meeting service is one of the most important institutions for extending church influence. Dr. Louis Albert Banks, the distinguished pastor of the First Methodist church in Cleveland, Ohio, has been unusually favoured in this department of his work. His evening meetings have attracted large congregations, and many new members have been added to the church. It is in response to numerous requests the present volume has been prepared. It contains fifty-two short talks for prayer-meetings—one for each week in the year. Such talks as these are calculated to attract large congregations, and to make the meeting helpful to all who attend. The subjects are treated in original and striking ways, but never in a sensational or unwholesome manner. Anecdotes, stories, bright smiles, and poetical quotations enliven the talks. Their style is winning, and they are never too long to hold the interest of the hearers.

The Bible Vindicated by Marvellous Discoveries in Scripture Lands. By the author of "The Harvest-Home in Palestine." St. John, N.B.: R. A. H. Morrow. Price, 50 cents.

In these latter times the spade is often the best commentator on the Scriptures. The recent discoveries in Bible lands throw extraordinary light on the Word of God. They disprove many of the ideas which have had wide currency. It has been affirmed, for instance, that in the time of Moses the art of writing was unknown, and that, therefore, the Pentateuch could not have been his work. Recent discoveries show that there was a very copious literature, and even accounts of the deluge and other events re-

corded in the Pentateuch, long before the time of Moses.

The most compendious and inexpensive record of these discoveries that we know is that whose title is given above. It describes the explorations in Babylon and Nineveh; the discoveries in Egypt and Palestine; the Tel-el-Amarna tablets; the lost empire of the Hittites; the discoveries in the Lord's Land, especially those at Jerusalem and Lachish, and many others. Twelve illustrations add to the value of this book. It seems as if the very stones of the wall cry out in testimony of the authenticity and indubitable veracity of the Word of God.

The Victorian Era Series. British Foreign Missions, 1837-1897. By Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, Foreign Secretary to the London Missionary Society, and Rev. Arthur N. Johnson, M.A., Home Secretary to the London Missionary Society. London: Blackie & Son, Limited. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co., Limited. Pp., XI-233. Price, 90 cents.

One of the most striking characteristics of the present century is that it is the century of missions. Especially is this true of the sixty-two years of Her Majesty's reign. In this volume is presented a concise account of the progress of missions in a hundred years, but especially during the last sixty years. It is a stirring story, and reads like a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles. In this great work the record of Methodism is one of the most successful. The author describes the special developments of mission work, as education, literature, medical missions, woman's work, native churches, home life, and the like. It will be an admirable book for our mission circles, Epworth Leagues, Sunday-schools and private readers.

### The Little Ones and the Aged.

Mrs. Geneva Simons, of New York City, thus touchingly writes to Dr. Duncan concerning her Home Department work:

During the work connected with the last quarter, I was greatly interested in making some new centres. We have a new Baptist orphanage, called the "Jennie Clarkson Home." This is at Katonah, N.Y. The little Sunday-school building

is some little distance away, and the younger children cannot go. It occurred to me that here was a good field. I got the matron to join our Home Department, and the five young children who could not go to the school. I sent the quarterlies, according to age, and to the little ones I sent the little papers we use. I send these each month, and the matron will give the proper ones out each Sunday.

Then I came back to the city, and one afternoon went to the Baptist Home which we maintain for the aged. There are eighty inmates. I had only one afternoon to go from room to room and see the old people, and talk to them. I cannot tell you, Dr. Duncan, the pleasure these old people took in it all, nor how charmed they were with the thought of being in touch with Sunday-school work. I only had time to get twenty names then, but will add greatly to the list when I return to the city. It seemed to me in both of these centres that first, to give the little ones the dear little lessons so adapted to their youthful comprehension, and in the second case, to give the old people a systematic course of study in the Bible, and lessons which they could talk over with each other, giving them something new in their rather monotonous lives, was rendering to both parties a real service.

I see such beautiful effects, such wonderful possibilities, that I am very enthusiastic over it all.

### Literary Notes.

A most important historical work, dealing with the beginnings of Pennsylvania and New York, is John Fiske's "The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America," has appeared from the publishing house of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Miss Phelps' story, "Loveliness," which appears in the August Atlantic, has been published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., in a pretty volume, with illustrations. It is not to be supposed that "Loveliness" will excite any great affection for Miss Phelps among visionseers.

If you cannot join the main school and attend regularly, then do the next best thing—join the Home Department, and study the lessons every week in your home. This will make 1900 a "glad new year," from January to December.

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**A New Leaf.**

He came to my desk with a quivering lip—  
 The lesson was done—  
 "Dear teacher, I want a new leaf," he  
 said;  
 "I have spoiled this one."  
 In place of the leaf so stained and  
 blotted  
 I gave him a new one all unspotted,  
 And into his sad eyes smiled—  
 "Do better now, my child."  
 I went to the throne with a quivering  
 soul—  
 The old year was done—  
 "Dear Father, hast thou a new leaf for  
 me?  
 I have spoiled this one."  
 He took the old leaf, stained and blotted,  
 And gave me a new one all unspotted,  
 And into my sad heart smiled—  
 "Do better now, my child."  
 —Carrie Haw Price, in Episcopal Recorder.

**A Wise Sunday-school.**

The St. Paul's Presbyterian Sunday-School, Fredericton, N.B., has a Home Department of 100 members. To each member the school presents a monthly copy of The International Evangel, for lesson study, obtaining the large club at reduced rates. That is a bright thought, for while the church will be increasing the Bible study of these home seniors, they are also giving them a wide education in modern Sunday-school work. The home-staying mothers will find in the Primary columns much by which they teach the little ones not yet old enough for school. That school has had a club for more than a year, and they know the safe, good religious teaching of The Evangel. Let the visitors be diligent, and surely that church will reap from so good a seed sowing.—A. Lucas, in International Evangel.

**Lessons and Golden Texts.—Studies in the Life of Jesus.**

- I. January 7.—THE BIRTH OF JESUS. Luke 2. 1-16. *Commit vs.* 8-11. (Read Luke 1; Matt. 1; John 1. 1-18.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matt. 1. 21.
- II. January 14.—THE CHILD JESUS VISITS JERUSALEM. Luke 2. 41-52. *Commit vs.* 49-52. (Read Matt. 2; Luke 2. 21-38.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Luke 2. 52.
- III. January 21.—THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Luke 3. 1-17. (May be used as a Temperance Lesson.) *Commit vs.* 3-6. (Read Mat. 3. 1-7; 4. 1-6.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Luke 3. 4.
- IV. January 28.—THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS. Matt. 3. 13 to 4. 11. *Commit vs.* 16, 17. (Compare Luke 3. 21, 22 with 4. 1-13.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3. 17.
- V. February 4.—THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS. John 1. 35-46. *Commit vs.* 35-37. (Read John 1. 19-51.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** They followed Jesus. John 1. 37.
- VI. February 11.—JESUS AND NICODEMUS. John 3. 1-18. *Commit vs.* 14-17. (Read John 2.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; John 3. 16.
- VII. February 18.—JESUS AT JACOB'S WELL. John 4. 5-26. *Commit vs.* 11-14. (Read John 3. 22 to 4. 45.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4. 24.
- VIII. February 25.—JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH. Luke 4. 16-50. *Commit vs.* 17-19. (Read Matt. 4. 13-16. Mark 1. 14-15; John 4. 46-54.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1. 11.
- IX. March 4.—JESUS HEALING IN CAEPERNAUM. Mark 1. 21-34. *Commit vs.* 32-34. (Read Luke 5. 1-11.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** And he healed many that were sick. Mark 1. 34.
- X. March 11.—THE PARALYTIC HEALED. Mark 2. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 9. 12. (Read Matt. 4. 23-25; Mark 1. 35-45.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Mark 2. 10.
- XI. March 18.—JESUS AT MATTHEW'S HOUSE. Mark 2. 13-22. *Commit vs.* 15-17. (Compare Matt. 9. 9-17.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** He said unto him, Follow me. Luke 5. 27.
- XII. March 25.—REVIEW. **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Mark 10. 45.

**Order of Services.—First Quarter.**

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. (1 John 4. 9-16.)  
 SUPT. 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.  
 SCHOOL. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.  
 SUPT. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.  
 SCHOOL. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.  
 SUPT. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.  
 SCHOOL. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

**OPENING SERVICE.**

- SUPT. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.  
 ALL. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.  
 III. SINGING.  
 IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.  
 V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.  
 VI. SINGING.

**CLOSING SERVICE.**

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. (Psa. 62. 5-7.)  
 SUPT. My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.  
 SCHOOL. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be moved.  
 ALL. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

### LESSON I. THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

[Jan. 7.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.  
Matt. 1. 21.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read Luke 1; Matt. 1; John 1. 1-18.]

**Luke 2. 1-16.** [Commit to memory verses 8-11.]

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Au-gus-tus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 And this taxing was first made when Cy-re-ni-us was governor of Syr'i-a.

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Jo-seph also went up from Gal'i-lee, out of the city of Naz'a-reth, into Ju-de'a, unto the city of Da'vid, which is called Beth'le-hem, (because he was of the house and lineage of Da'vid,)

5 To be taxed with Ma'ry his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 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.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of Da'vid a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'le-hem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Ma'ry and Jo-seph, and the babe lying in a manger.

#### REVISED VERSION.

1 Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Au-gus-tus,

2 that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment made when Qui-r'i-ni-

3 us was governor of Syr'i-a. And all went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city.

4 And Jo-seph also went up from Gal'i-lee, out of the city of Naz'a-reth, into Ju-de'a, to the city of Da'vid, which is called Beth'le-hem,

because he was of the house and family of

5 Da'vid: to enroll himself with Ma'ry, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

6 And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be de-

7 livered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling

clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were shepherds in the same coun-try abiding in the field, and keeping watch by

9 night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore

10 afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid: for behold, I bring you good tidings of

great joy which shall be to all the people:

11 for there is born to you this day in the city of Da'vid a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying

13 in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host

praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom

he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds

said one to another, Let us now go even un-

to Beth'le-hem, and see this thing that is

come to pass, which the Lord hath made

known unto us. And they came with haste,

and found both Ma'ry and Jo-seph, and the

babe lying in the manger.

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#### QUESTIONS.

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Time.—The very end of B. C. 5 or the early part of B. C. 4. Place.—Bethlehem of Judea.

### Home Readings.

- M. The Birth of Jesus. Luke 2. 1-9.  
 Th. The Birth of Jesus. Luke 2. 10-20.  
 W. Simeon's prophecy. Luke 2. 25-35.  
 Th. Mary's thanksgiving. Luke 1. 46-55.  
 F. The divine Word. Heb. 1. 1-9.  
 S. Divinity and humanity. John 1. 1-14.  
 S. The Saviour. 1 John 4. 7-14.

### Lesson Hymns.

No. 299, New Canadian Hymnal.

Angels, from the realms of glory,  
 Wing your flight o'er all the earth.

No. 304, New Canadian Hymnal.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
 Let earth receive her King.

No. 302, New Canadian Hymnal.

Hark! what mean those holy voices,  
 Sweetly sounding through the skies?

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. *The Providential Method*, v. 1-7.  
 What led Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem?  
 Who was Cæsar Augustus?  
 What is here meant by "taxing?"  
 Tell what you know about the "annunciation."  
 What are "swaddling clothes?"  
 Was it a strange thing at that time for babes to be wrapped in swaddling clothes?  
 If not, then what was the significance of that sign?  
 Enumerate the miraculous events which surrounded our Lord's birth.
2. *The Angelic Message*, v. 8-14.  
 Who received the first news of the Saviour's birth?  
 Why were such people chosen for this honor?  
 How was the event made known to them?  
 What is the effect of unearthly appearances upon men, and why?  
 What were these good tidings?  
 What is the meaning of the word "Christ?"  
 Why was a sign needed?  
 Who appeared with the angel?  
 How did this illustrate Dan. 7. 10?  
 What was the song of the heavenly host?  
 What did it bring to men, and how?  
 How is this song illustrated by Rev. 5. 13 and Col. 1. 19, 20?  
 Has Christ's coming brought peace among the nations of men?  
 How did it bring good will?

3. *The Confirmation of the Message*, v. 15, 16.  
 What was the determination of the shepherds?  
 Did it show any doubt of the angel's message?  
 Try to picture this scene to your minds: The tramp in the darkness over the fields, the admission through the gate into the silent little city, the activity about the caravansary, and the impulsive veneration of the supernatural Child.  
 What inspired their journey?  
 How were they an example to us?  
 What reasons can be given why Christ should come as a babe.  
 What reasons can be given why he should come in poverty?

### Teachings of the Lesson.

- Where in this lesson do we learn—
1. That God honors the lowly?
  2. That Christ's coming brings joy?
  3. That angels rejoice in the happiness of men?

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. *The Providential Method*, v. 1-7.  
 Of what decree does the lesson tell, and by whom was it issued?  
 Who then ruled in Syria?  
 Where did the people go for their taxing?  
 From what city and province did Joseph come?  
 Where did he go to be taxed?  
 Why did he go to Bethlehem?  
 Who accompanied him on the journey?  
 What happened while they were at Bethlehem?  
 Where was the child laid? Why?  
 What name was given the child, and why?  
 Matt. 1. 21, 25.
2. *The Angelic Message*, v. 8-14.  
 What night watchmen were on duty near Bethlehem?  
 Who suddenly appeared to them?  
 Of what were they afraid?  
 What did the angel say to comfort them?  
 What was his good news?  
 What "sign" did he give them?  
 Who suddenly joined the angel?  
 What was their song of joy?  
 Of whose good will was the birth of Jesus a pledge? John 3. 16.
3. *The Confirmation of the Message*, v. 15, 16.  
 Where did the angels go?  
 What visit did the shepherds suggest?  
 Does this indicate doubt or faith?  
 What did they find when they came?  
 When should we seek Jesus? Isa. 55. 6.

### Practical Teachings.

- Where in this lesson are we shown—
1. The fulfillment of prophecy?
  2. That angels are interested in our welfare?
  3. That God's glory is man's highest good?



### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- Where was Jesus born? Luke 2. 4.  
 Who was the Roman emperor at this time? Luke 2. 1.  
 What did he say should be done?  
 Why? *He wanted to know how many were in his empire.*  
 Where must each Jew be enrolled? *In the place to which his tribe belonged.*  
 Where did Joseph and Mary go? Why? Luke 2. 4.  
 Why was Jesus born in a stable? Who soon heard the good news? Who told the story to the shepherds? Why was this honor shown them? *They longed for his coming.*  
 What was the angels' song?

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. Where was Jesus Christ born? *At Bethlehem of Judea.*
2. Who received the first news of his birth? *Shepherds near Bethlehem.*
3. By whom was the news brought? *By an angel.*
4. Repeat the chorus of the heavenly host? *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*
5. Where did the shepherds find their infant Lord? *Lying in a manger.*
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"Thou shalt call," etc.*

### NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

16. How doth God regard sin? Sin is the abominable thing which God doth hate, and the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

### THE LESSON OUTLINE.

BY J. L. HURLBUT, D.D.

#### The Saviour in the Manger.

- I. KINGLY.  
*Of the house.... of David.* v. 4.  
 Unto David a.... branch. Jer. 23. 5.  
 Offspring of David. Rev. 22. 16.
- II. HUMAN.  
*Brought forth.... son.* v. 7.  
 The Word was made flesh. John 1. 14.  
 Made of a woman. Gal. 4. 4.
- III. LOWLY.  
*Laid him in a manger.* v. 7.  
 He became poor. 2 Cor. 8. 9.  
 As he that serveth. Luke 22. 27.
- IV. ANGEL-ATTENDED.  
*Angel.... came upon them.* v. 9.  
 Let all the angels worship. Heb. 1. 6.  
 Angels.... subject unto him. 1 Pet. 3. 22.
- V. JOY-BRINGING.  
*Tidings of great joy.* v. 10.  
 We joy in God. Rom. 5. 11.  
 Believing ye rejoice. 1 Pet. 1. 8.
- VI. WORLD-WIDE.  
*To all people.* v. 10.  
 Teach all nations. Matt. 28. 19.  
 Ye are all one. Gal. 3. 28.
- VII. PEACE-BRINGING.  
*On earth peace.* v. 14.  
 He is our peace. Eph. 2. 14.  
 Peace to him.... far. Isa. 57. 19.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

This lesson dates four years before the beginning of our era. Dionysius Exiguus, in a later age of ignorance, used the best available scholarship in search of the date of our Lord's birth, and the Church, following his findings without question, made an error of four years. Whether or not our Lord was born on December 25 we do not know; there is hardly as much reason to believe it as there is cause to doubt it; but there is general agreement among scholars that he was born at the very end of B. C. 5 or in the early part of B. C. 4. Much has been made of the fact that this world-of-wars was generally at peace when the Son of God was born. The story of our lesson is one of unexampled beauty. The decree from Cæsar Augustus calling for a new census brought Joseph, the carpenter, from Nazareth, in Galilee, to Bethlehem, in Judea, "because he was of the house and lineage of David." Mary, Joseph's espoused wife, came with him, and their reception was rude, "because there was no room for them in the inn." In the meantime, in the open night, the low-caste shepherds were reclining in the grazing meadows, with the sheep destined for the temple service around them. To them came the most wonderful revelation ever made to men.

**Verse 1.** *Cæsar Augustus.* The emperor of Rome. Augustus was his name. Cæsar, his title, is perpetuated in the modern imperial titles "czar" and "kaiser." It was adopted from the name of the great Julius Cæsar. *All the world should be taxed.* All the inhabited places (meaning, of

course, enrolled, dertaken, gustus, enrollment

2. *Cyrus* Quirintus been gov before B. years.

3. *To the city.* This Hebrews then by

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course, all places subject to Rome) should be enrolled. An enumeration of the world undertaken by Julius Cæsar was completed by Augustus, who was incessantly active in making enrollments, conscriptions, and taxations.

2. *Cyrenius*. Identified with Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, who is generally accounted to have been governor of Syria twice, for four years or so before B. C. 1, and again from A. D. 6 for several years.

3. *To be taxed* [enrolled], *everyone into his own city*. This was according to native custom, for Hebrews were always enrolled first by tribes, then by clans, and then by households. Rome had quite other methods; but it was Roman policy to favor the custom of subject nations.

4. *Joseph*. Almost all that we know about the foster-father of Jesus is that he was a carpenter of Nazareth, of the house and lineage of David. *City of Nazareth . . . city of David*. These two towns were eighty miles apart. Joseph's journey was toilsome, but he lived under a despotism, and had no choice; and he may have had his full share of pride in going back to the birthplace of his royal ancestor. Besides, it is likely that this journey for enrollment was combined with one of the festal journeys which every year male Hebrews were bound by their religion to make to Jerusalem.

5. We must assume *Mary*, as well as Joseph, to have been directly descended from King David. *Espoused wife*. Betrothal in that day was as binding as marriage is now.

7. *Her firstborn son*. From this phrase and another, "the brethren of the Lord," it has been inferred that Mary had other children, born later; but neither term, according to the common speech of the East, proves this. The "brethren" may have been cousins. *Wrapped him in swaddling clothes*. Rolled him up in long pieces of cloth which bound the legs together and the arms close to the body. This barbarous custom prevailed in Europe until less than two centuries ago. *Manger . . . inn*. The inn was probably a caravansary or "khan," an inclosure of four walls with a shed around the inside, into which inclosure each traveler brought his own bed and provisions. Into the open square in the middle horses and cattle were driven. Mangers or feeding troughs in Palestine are usually of stone. Many sermons have been written and sacred songs sung concerning the melancholy fact that not only in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago, but in countless hearts now, there is no room for Jesus.

8. *Country* here means vicinity or neighborhood; the reference is to the pasture fields around Bethlehem. *Shepherds*. The high honor

of receiving the first news of the Saviour's birth is given not to philosophers or nobles, but to plain workmen while plying their vocation. Distinctions of rank and riches are as nothing in the eyes of God. *Abiding in the field*. In the Orient shepherds sometimes remain with their flocks all night, usually in temporary huts or booths. *Keeping watch*. "Watching by sections," to guard their flocks from robbers and wild beasts, and keep them from straying.

9. *The angel of the Lord*. The life of Christ on earth began with angelic announcements of his coming, was attended with angelic comforters in his temptation and his agony, and ended with angelic messengers of his rising and ascension. *Came upon them*. "Burst upon them," a sudden appearance. *The glory of the Lord*. "The light of God." Apparently a supernatural illumination, such as had accompanied earlier messages from God. The Hebrew prophets taught that God makes light his garment, and dwells in light which no man can approach. *Sore afraid*. "Feared a great fear." So had trembled Manoaah and Zacharias and Mary at the angel's coming. Even the purest hearts become conscious of unfitness when God's messengers are before them.

10. *Fear not*. It is strange how constantly God and his messengers have to quiet foolish human fears. "Fear not, Abram," he said, in misty antiquity; "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." "Fear not, Hagar; God hath heard." "Fear not, Gideon; thou shalt not die; peace be unto thee." "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard." "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." "Fear not, trembling women; Jesus, which was crucified, is not here; he is risen, as he said." "Fear not, Paul; God hath given thee all that sail with thee." *Good tidings*. News of pardon to sinners, salvation to men, the coming of Israel's King, the bruising of Satan's head, the universal establishment of Messiah's rule—surely these are good tidings. *To all people*. In the original, "the people;" referring originally to Israel, yet through Israel, as we now know, to the rest of the world.

11. *Unto you*. He is a Saviour to us as surely as to the shepherds. *The city of David*. A name given to Bethlehem as the birthplace of King David; in the prophecy of Micah it is announced as the birthplace of the Messiah. *A Saviour*. The Greeks called their favorite gods "Saviour," and kings assumed the word as a title. But the world had begun to long for a religious deliverer such as throne rooms and pantheons could never furnish. And the angels say, "Here he is; his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

12. *A sign unto you.* Not a sign to strengthen their faith, for none was needed, but a token to distinguish the babe. *Find the babe.* Rather, "find a babe." They were to behold in a helpless, newborn infant the world's Saviour and God's Son. See in all this the humanity, the humility, and the sympathy of our Saviour with us in every stage of our being. *Swaddling clothes.* Bands wrapped closely around the body. *Lying in a manger.* The mangers from which cattle feed in the East are generally made of small stones and mortar in the shape of an open box, and it is not unusual for little children to sleep in them.

13, 14. *A multitude of the heavenly host.* That is, a throng of angels and heavenly beings, of whom there may be many orders (see Col. 1. 16). "An angel choir in the gallery of the firmament."—*Whedon.* *Saying.* Singing. Probably singing in fugue; that is, responsively, a method familiar to Hebrew music. *Glory to God in the highest.* This may mean either: (1) The highest measure of glory; (2) From the highest order of creation (angels); (3) To God, the highest over all; (4) in the highest heaven as contrasted with the peace on earth. *On earth peace.* These angel chorists saw the ultimate result of the Gospel in bringing peace to men: (1) Peace between God and man through the atonement; (2) Peace between man and man through a common love to Christ; (3) Peace among nations through the influence of

the Gospel. Not without significance is the fact that Christ was born at the only time, for centuries, when there was peace throughout the world. *Good will toward men.* Either meaning that the birth of Christ is a token of God's love toward men, or, as some translate, "good will among men."

15. *The angels were gone.* The vision fades, leaving the shepherds with their flocks. Hours of rapt glory are only occasional, and they leave us with the rugged realities of life. *Let us now go.* The latter clause of the verse shows that this is not the utterance of a doubt, desirous of testing the truth of a message, but of ardent faith, eager to see that in which it already believes. So it is our privilege not only to hear about Jesus, but to go to him and see him. *Bethlehem.* Now known as "Betlehem," a village of three thousand inhabitants, mostly Greek Christians. A cave traditionally supposed to be the place of Christ's birth is shown near the wall.

16. *They came with haste.* Showing their faith by the eagerness of their works, and willing to leave their flocks to look upon their Saviour. No earthly object is too dear to be forsaken for Christ. *Joseph.* The husband of Mary and the reputed father of Jesus. As his name is not mentioned after Christ is twelve years old, he is presumed to have died before the public ministry of our Lord began.

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

### THE FOURFOLD HISTORY.

The study of the life of Christ upon which we now enter is to include the accounts given in the four gospels. Attention, consequently, must be given not simply to the immediate text of the lessons, but to parallel accounts, if any, in the other gospels, and to the connecting links, so that we may obtain a comprehensive and orderly survey of the complete earthly life of our Lord. Teachers and scholars should recognize at the beginning this broad design in the arrangement of the series of lessons now before us. Failure to make this comparative study of the four gospels will defeat the main purpose of the plan on which the lessons are arranged.

### EVENTS PRECEDING THE BIRTH.

Mark and John give no account of the birth of Christ or of any incidents connected with it. Mark begins abruptly with the ministry of John the Baptist, and John, after his prelude, in which he speaks of Christ existing prior to the incarnation as the eternal Word, begins, also, his history

proper with the work and testimony of the Baptist. But Matthew and Luke give many circumstances preceding and associated with the birth of Jesus and with his infancy. The prenatal history given by these two evangelists may be put in the following outline:

1. The genealogies of Jesus. (Matt. 1. 1-17; Luke 3. 23-38.)

2. The annunciation to Zacharias by the angel Gabriel that his wife Elisabeth should bear a son, whose name should be John. (Luke 1. 5-23.)

3. Elisabeth's conception and retirement. (Luke 1. 23-25.)

4. The annunciation to Mary (at Nazareth, March to April, B. C. 5) by Gabriel that she should become the mother of Jesus. (Luke 1. 26-38.)

5. Mary visits Elisabeth (going from Nazareth to near Hebron, south of Jerusalem). (Luke 1. 39-56.) Note Elisabeth's "Salutation," and Mary's "Magnificat."

6. The annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Joseph by an angel in a dream. (Matt. 1. 18-25.)

7. The birth of Jesus. (Luke 2. 1-7.)  
8. Joseph's presence to Christ. (B. C. 4.) (1)

### BLENDING

The story connected with and beautiful supernatural order harmonious the lines of seemed perfect appear in the we know not of manifold had been in the of the nativity carpenter gave the ways of links of linear made to lead could not be that doubtless had come from to live in the reb; but the for it had been "shall be called angel Gabriel name," and as had never so ready was that she received only with bow according unto came upon her overshadowed perhaps so unknown when the her.

A decree of it in poses of God, each rollment or certain, and Jewish that it should be ancestral homes to Bethlehem in themselves perhaps had said that of should come (Bethlehem—a methsemah the

7. The birth of John the Baptist (June, B. C. 5). (Luke 1. 57-80.)

8. Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem, in obedience to Caesar's decree, to be enrolled (December, B. C. 4). (Luke 2. 1-5.)

#### BLENDING OF THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

The story of the events leading up to and connected with the birth of Jesus is a remarkable and beautiful blending of the natural and the supernatural. The supernatural comes into the natural order without shock or discord, and so harmonious are they that we can scarcely define the lines of their union. The historical situation seemed perfectly natural—only human agencies appear in the general movement of events; but we know now that that time was the focal point of manifold prophecies, and that a divine hand had been in all the world-movements that created the political and social situation at the time of the nativity. A simple virgin betrothed to a carpenter gave no suggestion of anything above the ways of common life; but to that virgin the links of lineage for a thousand years had been made to lead by a divine determination that could not be thwarted. By some circumstance that doubtless seemed most natural this virgin had come from the home of her fathers in Judea to live in the obscure northern village of Nazareth; but the hand of God was in her coming, for it had been spoken by the prophets that He "shall be called a Nazarene." And when the angel Gabriel appears to this "Mother-designate," and makes such amazing announcement as had never been made to human ears before, so ready was her soul for this high revelation that she received it without exclamation, but only with bowed head, saying, "Be it unto me according unto thy word;" and the Holy Ghost came upon her and the power of the Highest overshadowed her (Luke 1. 35) so gently and perhaps so unconsciously that she may not have known when the great mystery was wrought in her.

A decree of Caesar issued without any suspicion that it had any connection with the purposes of God, called at a precise date for an enrollment or census of the population of Palestine, and Jewish custom and prejudice required that it should be by families at the seats of their ancestral homes; and so Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem in time for the birth of the Child, themselves perhaps never thinking that a prophet had said that out of Bethlehem the great Ruler should come (Micah 5. 2). And that night in Bethlehem—a mother passing through a mother's Gethsemane there in the manger of an inn, a

child born as all children are born; and on the hills not far away shepherds keeping watch with their flocks. How natural it all seems, how utterly and purely human! But to that night all the centuries had been slowly leading up, and suddenly "the heavens grew ruddy with the deepening feet of angels," and to wondering ears the announcement was made that while the world slept the supreme miracle of history had been wrought. And is not all this blending of the natural and the supernatural in this sacred story simply suggestive of what all human life is or ought to be?

#### "GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH."

The great fact in this Bethlehem story before which we must pause, and into the significance of which we must inquire, is that it tells us how through a natural human birth God became manifest in the flesh. No one can frankly read these accounts by Matthew and Luke without admitting that this is what they intend to tell us. John, in the preface to his gospel, states the stupendous fact by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." That is what the Annunciations, and the *Benedictus*, and the *Magnificat*, and the Angel's Song, and Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis*, and the Magi's worship mean. The Scriptures explain nothing, but they state everything. This child, born at Bethlehem, was to be "called the Son of the Highest." His cradle is not surrounded with the reflex glory because of what he afterward did, but what he did afterward finds its explanation in what he was there in the manger. He was at once the Son of Man and the Son of God. The reason for his birth is clearly stated. His mission was redemption. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." We may ask a thousand unanswerable questions in the presence of this manger-cradle; but we shall never get beyond the philosophy of the event expressed in John 3. 16, and in Galatians 4. 4. Let the great fact and its great meaning be set clearly before our minds in this first lesson in the study of "the Life that was the Light of men."

#### Thoughts for Young People.

##### Side Lights on the Lesson Story.

1. *God's revelations come to men when they are performing their routine duties.* It is to the priest attending to his regular task, to the shepherds caring for their flocks in the usual manner, to the business man performing his everyday duty, to the mother busy with her humdrum household responsibilities, that God's messenger comes

There is an ancient legend of one of the saints who vainly sought for God in self-torture and acts of devotion, and at last received a revelation from on high while engaged in weaving the cloth for his garment.

2. *The birth of Christ foretold his after-treatment.* "He lay in the manger," writes Dr. Bushnell, "because there was no room for him in the inn. Crowded out of the highest place, which is his by royal right, he has ever since been compelled to take whatever is left for him by human selfishness. The great world is very much like that inn at Bethlehem; preoccupied, crowded full in every part, so that, as the mother of Jesus looked up wistfully to the guest chambers that cold night, drawing her Holy Thing to her bosom, in like manner Jesus himself stands at the door of these multitudes, knocking vainly, till his head is filled with dew and his locks are wet with the drops of the night."

3. *Guilty man is surprised when God comes in any way but as an avenger,* and God's messengers seldom speak without having to say as a preface, "Fear not!"

4. *Wrapped in swaddling clothes.* Not unmeaning is this fact. It is as if the angel had said, "You shall know the babe because he is like any other." When the Hindus imagine the coming of a god to earth—an avatar, as they call it—they surround him with marvelous circumstances; but when the real Son of God comes he appears like any other helpless human infant, and he really is what he appears to be.

5. *Lying in a manger.* The Christ might have come helpless like the rest of humanity, but on a higher range of society. He never could have been effective as a Saviour if he had not been on a level with the lowest. When men seek to raise a building they put their machinery to work on the foundation, and not on the spire. When God seeks to elevate a race he touches the bottom layer.

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

*The birth of Christ.* Christ has been called the decimal point of history. He cut the chronology of the world in twain. When you read your classic writers you notice that such and such a thing took place before Rome was founded. Everything now is taking place either before or after Christ. The birth of Christ is the Greenwich from which all the longitudes of time are reckoned; and when Mr. Gibbon wrote his history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire he had to date every chapter "A. D." He did not believe in the Lord, but he always had to write

"in the year of our Lord." And the most confirmed skeptic could not even write a check on the bank, or invite his friend to take dinner with him, without putting down the date which acknowledges that in such a year Jesus Christ was born.—*M. D. Hoag.*

*Verse 1.* When the time came for the prophecy regarding Christ's birth to be fulfilled God put the whole world in motion to bring Mary to Bethlehem.—*Moody's Notes.*

*Verse 7.* "Wrapped in swaddling clothes." How the proud world misses the Christ. They overlook him. They are searching for him in cathedrals and in theologies. The Jews sought for him in their voluminous interpretations and in their elaborate symbolisms. The Greeks seek for him in philosophical speculations, the Jews seek for him in extraordinary signs and wonders; but the real and simple-minded inquirer is sent to the lowly manger to find him wrapped about in swaddling clothes of our poor humanity.—*Bible Studies*, '92.

Jesus was born in a common house of entertainment, where all might come to him, and he died with his arms extended to receive all.—*Moody's Notes.*

*Verse 9.* The Gospel message comes first to alarm men and then to bring peace. By the light of nature we see God above us, by the light of the law we see God against us, but by the Gospel we see him with us in our nature.—*Matthew Henry.*

When Christ was born midnight gloom lightened into midday brightness. When Christ died midday darkened into midnight (see Luke 23: 44).—*Moody's Notes.*

*Verse 10.* God's covenant of works was for the Jewish people alone, but the glad tidings are for all people (Mark 16: 15). The first evangelist was an angel. Contrast the giving of the law (Exod. 19) with the dawn of the day of grace.

*Verse 14.* Heaven's choir came down to sing when heaven's King came down to save.—*Moody's Notes.*

*Verses 15-20.* "Let us now go." How many miss finding the Saviour because they do not at once act upon the convictions which the Holy Spirit works in their hearts! "At a more convenient season I will call for thee" has cost many a man and woman their souls. They did not stop to consider what might become of their sheep. What are sheep in comparison with a Saviour. Yet how many tarry and postpone coming because of their "sheep," or their "merchandise," or their "oxen," or their "farms," or their domestic and social concerns. Happy shepherds! They were the first sinners in this world who came and found the Saviour; for they

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were in advance of the Magi, who came after Mary and the child Jesus had been removed from the stable to the house. "And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God." They left their sheep in the field for a little while to go and find the Saviour, but they returned again to their work with glad and happy hearts. The common work of this life can be much better done after having found Christ than before. How blessed it is that we can resume what is called our secular work, after conversion, praising and glorifying God.—*Pentecost.*

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES.

If we had never before heard it, this story of the birth of Jesus so simply told in the gospels would fill us with wonder and absorbing interest. But it is so familiar there is danger of reading it carelessly, and losing its sweet and sacred heart-lessons. Let us study prayerfully, eager to get from it new spiritual riches. It would have taken volumes to tell a merely human story of such a being and such a birth. Its simplicity is a proof that those who wrote it were divinely inspired. Only a few sentences, and the greatest fact in the history of the universe, with its marvellous attendant circumstances, is told. But not its effects upon humanity; these gather force through all ages, over all lands, in all hearts, to endless eternities. How much the birth of Jesus means to you and me! Every interest of our life is touched by it; earth is transfigured, heaven is opened, in the light of the star of Bethlehem. His name was called Jesus because he should save his people from their sins. He is brother and Saviour. He might have come from heaven to earth, as the angels sometimes came—Gabriel, for instance, when he appeared to Zacharias and to Mary, a man in full strength. But then he would not have been one of us, he would never have felt that we were really "his people." So he came as a little child, just as we came into the world. He needed a mother's care; he grew in mind and body as we grow; "in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." If we could only understand that the things pertaining to God which chiefly concern us include babyhood, mother's care and training, the look of her eyes, the tones of her voice, her touch, her unconscious influence, because all these affect the character, we would see how much the manger cradle of Jesus means for us. Motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, are reverent and holy thoughts while we sit in that lowly cave with the pure-hearted

mother and her divine-human child, who was born like his people that he might save them. Every baby hand is hallowed by the touch of that which the virgin mother caressed. Every pain or cry from the thousands of suffering little children appeals to us more tenderly, and hopefully too, when we think of the brother-baby in the manger. The little feet that have passed through the gateway of death are radiant with light because the infant Jesus was once like them, that he might be their Saviour.

What a day that was when the news flew through heaven that the world's Saviour was born. Yet the world did not know it, and did not care to know. A multitude of the heavenly host came to tell the shepherds where to find him, but the people in the crowded towns close by never knew the angels were near nor heard a note of their song. The heavenly messengers speak only to those who look for them and care to hear them. Blessed are your ears if they hear.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

This is an historic scene, and its best spiritual lessons can be brought forth incidentally in the clear presentation of the historic facts. Here are two "lesson schemes." **FIRST OUTLINE:** 1. Bring out the characteristics of "the same country;" the relation of Jerusalem to Bethlehem; "the watchtower of the flock." 2. Many human beings were used by God as tools to bring about fitting circumstances for the birth of our Lord. Get the class to suggest names and persons; for example, Caesar Augustus, Quirinus, the unnamed crowd which filled the inn, the shepherds, besides other participants in this joyful drama unmentioned in this lesson. 3. *Oriental customs.* Shepherds watching the flocks by night. The caravansary. The custom of "swaddling" children. Probably the English translators never dreamed that a time would come when that phrase would need explanation. 4. Recall a few *angelic appearances*, from both Testaments; then get the class to mention some characteristics of such appearances. Many of our conventional ideas are unbiblical. 5. The meaning of the *angelic chorus* (verse 14). 6. Contrast the *shepherds' conduct* with Mary's, and bring out the advantages and disadvantages of both courses. **SECOND OUTLINE:** 1. *The time.* The Augustan age; universal peace; extent of Roman empire; Greek language; Roman roads; general intelligence. 2. *The journey.* From Nazareth to Bethlehem; why taken; why through Perea; traits of Mary. 3. *The manger.* Orientalism; the Bethlehem inn a parable of the heart of the world, which crowds Christ into the lower places,

if not quite outside. 4. *The news.* The King has come; who shall receive the earliest tidings of his coming? Not —, nor —, nor —; but simple-hearted workmen. 5. *The Babe.* "God manifest in the flesh."

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

In the field with their flocks.  
Joy to the world!  
While shepherds watched their flocks.  
Hark! the herald-angels sing.  
O little town of Bethlehem!

The first Nowell.  
Hark! what mean those holy voices.  
Silent night!  
Once in Bethlehem of Judah.  
Once when the world lay awary.

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BY REV. S. G. AYRES, B.D.

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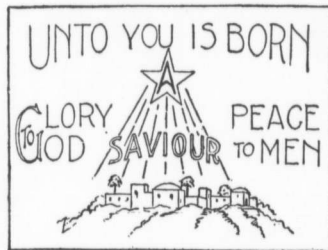
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#### Blackboard.

BY THOMAS G. ROGERS.



"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." Thus sang the multitude of the heavenly host when long ago they proclaimed the birth of Jesus, he who was to save his people from their sins. As we study his life again we shall see how he glorified God by unveiling his nature to men, and by the finished work of human redemption (John 17. 4, 7). We,

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too, may glorify God by manifesting the spirit and mind of Christ; and if we remember and obey his new commandment, that we love one another, we shall fulfill the angels' message, and spread on earth the spirit of peace and good will.

**LESSON II. THE CHILD JESUS VISITS JERUSALEM.** [Jan. 14.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2. 52.

**AUTHORIZED VERSION.**

[Read Matt. 2; Luke 2. 21-38.]

**Luke 2. 41-52.** [*Commit to memory verses 49-52.*]

41 Now his parents went to Je-ru'sa-lem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Je-ru'sa-lem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'sa-lem; and Jo'seph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Je-ru'sa-lem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'sus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

**REVISED VERSION.**

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'-

42 sa-lem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up

43 after the custom of the feast: and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were return-

44 ing, the boy Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'-sa-lem; and his parents knew it not; but sup-

45 posing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him

46 among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to

47 Je-ru'-sa-lem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the

48 temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions:

49 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when

50 they saw him, they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou

51 thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto

52 them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

53 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down

54 with them, and came to Naz'a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept

55 all these sayings in her heart.

56 And Je'sus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

**Time.**—Probably the spring of A. D. 9.  
**Places.**—1. Nazareth. 2. In and near Jerusalem.

**Home Readings.**

**M.** The Child Jesus Visits Jerusalem. Luke 2. 40-52.

**Th.** The passover feast. Deut. 16. 1-8.

**W.** The Father's business. John 5. 17-24.

**Th.** The Jews astonished. John 7. 1-15.

**F.** Value of wisdom. Prov. 4. 1-13.

**S.** The wise child. Prov. 23. 15-25.

**S.** Growing in grace. 2 Pet. 3. 11-18.

**Lesson Hymns.**

No. 287, New Canadian Hymnal.

Safely through another week,  
God has brought us on our way;  
Let us now a blessing seek,  
Waiting in his courts to-day.

No. 281, New Canadian Hymnal.

Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
I would follow thee;  
Meek, and pure, and holy  
Thy disciple be.

No. 279, New Canadian Hymnal.

God has said, "For ever blessed  
Those who seek me in their youth;  
They shall find the path of wisdom,  
And the narrow way of truth."

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.**

1. *Lost in the City*, v. 41-45.

What indications are here given that from infancy Jesus's extraordinary nature asserted itself?

Were women compelled by the law to accompany the men on these festal occasions?



What stage in the training of a Jewish boy was reached at twelve years of age?

What method of travel made such oversight as this easily practicable without any carelessness on the part of the parents?

How were the caravans probably organized?

About how far was "a day's journey"?

Explain the Jewish method of reckoning days.

2. *Found in the Temple*, v. 46-52.

About how many hours may have been reckoned in these "three days"?

Who were the doctors?

What topics were usually discussed by these men?

Was Jesus here in the attitude of a teacher or of a pupil?

What sort of ability did he display?

Were Mary's words intended as a reproof?

To whom did Jesus allude as "my Father"?

What reason did he give for his lingering?

Did the boy Jesus assert his superiority to his parents?

How did his mother regard these astonishing circumstances?

What is meant by the fourfold growth here mentioned?

(a) What does growth in wisdom imply?

(b) Did Jesus differ in exterior conditions from his youthful companions?

(c) What was the reason for his increase in favor with men?

(d) How could he increase in favor with God?

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

1. The Godhead, as well as manhood, grew in Jesus Christ. His youth was formative, as our young days are. We never can solve the mystery of the incarnation, nor thoroughly understand the nature of the God-man; but it will not do to forget that Jesus's life, as well as ours, was probationary—that his temptations were real, and that his youth was a growth in the eyes of both God and man.

2. Our heavenly Father's business should command our earliest and most active energies. If we seek his cause first, all good things will be added.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. *Lost in the City*, v. 41-45.

What journey did Jesus's parents make every year?

For what purpose did they go?

At what age did Jesus go up with them?

What did the passover commemorate? *Exod.* 12. 11-14.

Until what time did Joseph remain in Jerusalem?

How many days did the feast last? *Dent.* 16. 8.

How did the boy become separated from his parents?

How far did they go before they missed him?

Where first did they seek him?

Where did they next go in search?

2. *Found in the Temple*, v. 46-52.

When and where did they find him?

How was he engaged?

What did the doctors think of his words?

What answer did Jesus make?

How was this answer regarded by Joseph and Mary?

What was Jesus's chief joy? *John* 4. 34.

Where was the home of this family?

What is said of the boy's obedience?

Where did the mother hide Jesus's sayings?

In that did Jesus constantly grow? **GOLDEN TEXT.**

What prophecy was thus fulfilled? *Isa.* 11. 2.

#### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The duty of religious worship?

2. The duty of seeking knowledge?

3. The duty of filial obedience?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What do we know of the childhood of Jesus? *Luke* 2. 40.

Where did he go when he was twelve years old?

What was a Jewish boy called at this age? "*A son of the law.*"

What did this mean? *That he was old enough to think for himself, and to attend the religious feasts.*

What was the sign of his sonship?

What are these little boxes called? *Phylacteries.*

What did the people do during the feast? *They went daily to the temple.*

Do you think Jesus loved to be there?

What could he see there? *The priests, the altars, the sacrifices, the great curtains that hid the Holy Place, and the old rabbis.*

What happened after the company started for home?

How long did Mary and Joseph search for Jesus?

Why did he say he stayed behind?

Where did he get such wisdom and knowledge?

What is there to help you in the story of the boy Jesus?

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**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

1. How did Jesus grow in boyhood? *Strong in spirit, wisdom, and grace.*
2. When he was twelve years old where did his parents take him? *To the passover feast in Jerusalem.*
3. After they had lost him, where did they find him? *In the temple, in the midst of the doctors, studying the Scriptures.*
4. What did Mary say? *"Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."*

5. How did Jesus reply? *"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"*
6. How did Jesus grow in young manhood? GOLDEN TEXT: *"And Jesus,"* etc.

**NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.**

17. Into what estate did our first parents fall by their sin?  
Our first parents by their sin incurred the Divine displeasure, lost the image of God, and exposed themselves to sin and misery forever.

**THE LESSON OUTLINE.****The Boy Jesus.****I. HIS HUMAN NATURE.**

- Grew and waxed strong.* v. 40.  
Partakers of flesh and blood. Heb. 2. 14.  
Likeness of men. Phil. 2. 7.

**II. HIS RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.**

- Grace of God.... upon him.* v. 40.  
*Grace.... into thy lips.* Psa. 45. 2.  
*Spirit.... rest upon him.* Isa. 11. 2, 3.

**III. HIS LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.**

- Found.... in the temple.* vs. 41-46.  
One thing have I desired. Psa. 27. 4.  
Wait upon the Lord. Isa. 40. 31.

**IV. HIS INTELLIGENCE.**

- Astonished at.... understanding.* v. 47.

- Wondered.... gracious words. Luke 4. 22.  
Never man spake. John 7. 46.

**V. HIS EARNEST PURPOSE.**

- My Father's business.* v. 49.  
Delight to do thy will. Psa. 40. 8.  
Work.... while it is day. John 9. 4.

**VI. HIS FILIAL OBEDIENCE.**

- Subject unto them.* v. 51.  
Obey your parents. Eph. 6. 1.  
Hearken unto thy father. Prov. 23. 22.

**VII. HIS POPULARITY.**

- In favor with.... man.* v. 52.  
Shalt thou find favor. Prov. 3. 3, 4.  
Approved of men. Rom. 14. 18.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

From the events of our Lord's birth we now pass over an interval of twelve years to the single incident recorded of his boyhood. During those years the wicked reign of Herod the Great having come to an end, his dominions were divided among four sons; and when Jesus was ten years old a Roman governor, Roman soldiers, and Roman coinage were established in Judea. Herod Antipas, however, still ruled Galilee and Perea. Jesus had been protected from the jealousy of King Herod by a flight into Egypt, and from thence had been taken to his mother's home among the hills of Nazareth, where, in communion with God and nature, he spent the years of youth, growing up to his great work. At the age of twelve years, as we learn from our lesson to-day, Jesus accompanied his mother and Joseph in their annual visit to the temple at Jerusalem. When they departed he remained within the cloistered courts of his Father's house. After three days of anxious search he was found in the temple, listening to learned students of the Scriptures, and charming them with his deep spiritual perceptions. From the temple he went forth in meek obedience to the quiet of the Galilean home, there to wait until his Father who is in heaven should summon him forth. The entire incident is beautifully typical, for "The child is father of the man." In childhood, with a "play" fort and snowballs, Napoleon manifested his military spirit as really as ever he did in maturity; Wellington was as conservative and sensitive of honor when a boy as when commander-in-chief; Mozart was as musical, Nelson was as brave, Davy was as inventive, in boyhood as they were in adult years. Each was as we might expect him to have been from a study of his later career. To-day we turn to the childhood of Jesus. What may we expect him to show? He shows precisely the qualities which later drew to him twelve disciples, aroused the antagonism of the Pharisees, comforted all who sought the kingdom of God, and resulted in the temporal defeat and the eternal triumph of Calvary.

**Verse 41.** *His parents.* Mary and Joseph are both termed "his parents," because they appeared as such to the community. *Went to Jerusalem.* According to the best authorities the poverty of the common people of Palestine in Jesus's time was very great; but their religion called them, at stated times and at considerable expense, to go to Jerusalem, and they went. Christianity makes no such detailed demands on our time or money, because it claims our hearts. *Every year.* Every male Israelite was bound to make this pilgrimage, and many pious people believed that women should go also. Only "the sick, the aged, boys under twelve, the blind, the deaf, and lunatics" were permitted to remain at home. The attendance of Mary is an evidence of her deep religious interest. *Feast of the pass-over.* This was the greatest of all the Jewish feasts. It was held in the spring, about the time known as Easter, and lasted seven days. It was called also the "feast of unleavened bread," as that was the only kind of bread eaten during its progress. It commemorated the departure of Israel from Egypt, when the angel of death "passed over" the houses sprinkled with the lamb's blood. During its celebration Jerusalem was crowded with at least four or five times its ordinary population.

**42.** *Twelve years old.* The age at which the young Jew was first considered subject to the law, and under obligation to observe the customs of the Church. As the Christian usages are easier and simpler, we should begin their practice earlier. The most exacting Jewish customs he scrupulously fulfilled. It "became him to fulfill all righteousness." Christians, like their Master, should be careful to fulfill all proper religious customs. *They went up to Jerusalem.* And this time took with them their boy. So far as we know Jesus had never been out of his little village home since his return from Egypt. The word "up" may have been used because Jerusalem is almost the most elevated city in Palestine, being two thousand seven hundred feet above the sea level.

**43.** *Fulfilled the days.* The thoughtful boy, into whose mind the consciousness of his origin and mission was beginning to dawn, would see deep meanings and foreshadowings in the slain lamb, the offered sacrifice, the sprinkled blood, and the solemn services of those eight days of the feast. *As they returned.* "God's services may not be so attended that we should neglect our particular callings."—*Bishop Hall.* After the services of the temple come those of Mary's household and Joseph's carpenter shop. *Carried behind.* This may not have been by absolute intention of the young Jesus, nor for want of care on the part of

his parents; but as an accident in the rush and press of the immense throng. Becoming separated from the company, he remained in the place of deepest interest to himself; and they felt less uneasy on account of his intelligence and trustworthiness of character. *Knew not of it.* In such a crowd it was easy to be lost. In the caravans of Galilean pilgrims the children seem to have usually traveled together, and it is not strange that Joseph and Mary lost sight of Jesus for three or four hours.

**44.** *Supposing him to have been in the company.* This is not remarkable, as the company was probably a caravan traveling together for safety. What a blessing when parents cannot only suppose, but be sure, that their children are to be found in good associations only! *A day's journey.* The first day's journey of a caravan was proverbially short, not more than six or eight miles. When fully under way they go about twenty-five miles a day. El Bireh, six miles north of Jerusalem, is said to be the place where Joseph's caravan stopped. *Kingsfolk and acquaintance.* The family of the Saviour had their relationships among the plain people of Galilee, who had come as pilgrims to the feast.

**45.** *They turned back.* Leaving the caravan at its halting place, and searching along the path of travel back to Jerusalem. At this point their parental alarm begins. *Seeking him.* Those who have lost their Saviour should at once turn back and seek him.

**46.** *After three days.* On the third day. Lange suggests that one day was spent in departure, one in return, and one in search. But they probably had not set out until late in the afternoon of the first day, and only three or four hours would be required to bring them back to Jerusalem from the first night's stopping place. The search was probably long and tedious. *In the temple.* Probably in one of the colonnades or porches surrounding the Court of the Women, where many people congregated and where the rabbis gave their instructions. Those who love God love his house, and, as children, are found in his courts. *Sitting in the midst.* The religious teachers, called rabbis, sat on a raised platform, with their disciples seated around them; while the general audience stood or sat outside the circle. Jesus was there not as a forward leader in the discussion, but as an intelligent listener and inquirer; "an eager-hearted and gifted learner, whose enthusiasm kindled their admiration, and whose bearing won their esteem and love."—*Farrar.* *The doctors.* Teachers of the law. Some of the most distinguished of the rabbis were living at this time—Hillel, Simeon, and Gamaliel. *Hearing....and asking.* In these

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oriental schools there was great liberty of questioning. Contrary to our customs, the scholars interrogated their teacher, and proposed doubts and difficulties for their instructor to answer.

47. *All that heard.* A large company assembled, for at the passover season the temple was crowded with strangers. *Astonished at his understanding.* They saw that this child had thought on the Scriptures, and could penetrate below the husks and shells of the teachers to the kernel of the truth.

48. *They saw him.* Mary and Joseph, coming suddenly upon a crowd in the court of the temple, were surprised to behold their son in the midst, an earnest participant in the discussion, while the witnesses stood wondering at his intelligence. *Son.* A gentle, loving rebuke. Those who must reprove should do it very tenderly. *Thy father.* This was the only possible way in which Mary could speak to her son of Joseph. Notice what a singular contrast occurs in the next phrase, when he tells her he must be about his Father's business. *Sorrowing.* Her anxiety shows some lack of faith.

49. *How is it.* These are the first recorded words from the lips of Jesus, and contain the characteristic features of all his utterances—an utter forgetfulness of self, combined with complete consciousness of his nature and thorough devotion to his work among men. *About my Father's business.* Or, "in my Father's house." Already he knew, though not from his mother's lips, the mystery of his divine origin; and the thought of his vocation was beginning to stir his

soul. We should be early interested both in God's house and God's cause.

50, 51. *They understood not.* They failed to comprehend fully the import of his words. So, ever, the utterances of Jesus fall upon dull ears and darkened minds. *Went down with them.* Though conscious of his own higher intelligence, he left the congenial courts of the temple at their bidding, fully submissive to his human lot. *Nazareth.* A village in a lovely vale, girdled with hills, two miles from the plain of Esdraelon, six west of Mount Tabor, and about twenty west of the southern end of the Sea of Tiberias, now En-Nasrah, with a population of about four thousand. *Subject unto them.* The only perfect child the world has ever seen was a model of submission to his parents. *His mother kept.* Another mysterious event in connection with her son was added to the themes for thought already in Mary's heart. Silently she brooded over these strange incidents, destined to have their explanation afterward.

52. *Increased.* For eighteen years after this the record of Jesus's life is unwritten. From Mark 6, 3 it would appear that he followed the vocation of Joseph as a carpenter. *In wisdom.* Trained by the teachings of a pious mother, by the communings of nature, by the oracles of the Old Testament and the Sabbath services of the synagogue, his mind advanced in natural growth. *Favor with God.* God's grace was manifested in him by the sweetness of his character and the earnestness of his piety. *And man.* True godliness of the right sort does not repel, but attracts, the love of others by its own power.

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

### INTERVENING EVENTS.

The following incidents in the history of the infancy of Jesus intervene between the last lesson and the present one:

1. The circumcision and naming of Jesus eight days after his birth (Luke 2, 21).

2. His presentation in the temple forty days after his birth, with the required offerings for the purification of the mother (Luke 2, 22-38). In this connection occurs the *Nunc Dimittis* of the aged Simeon and the thanksgiving and testimony of the prophetess Anna.

3. The visit of the Magi (Matt. 2, 1-12). It will be observed that from Luke's account we should be led to infer that Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth immediately after the ceremonies of the presentation. Matthew gives the incidents omitted by Luke. The visit of the wise men must have been soon after the presentation.

4. The flight into Egypt (Matt. 2, 13-15).

5. The slaughter of the innocents (Matt. 2, 16-18).

6. The return to Nazareth (Matt. 2, 19-23; Luke 2, 39-40). The time of the sojourn in Egypt is variously estimated at from a few months to seven years. It was probably less than a year. From Matthew's account we infer that Joseph and Mary first purposed to settle in Judea, and that they returned to Nazareth only because of the angel's warning in a dream. We may safely assume that Jesus was not less than six months nor more than one year old when he began his home life at Nazareth. It is stated by Matthew that the settlement at Nazareth was in fulfillment of prophecy—"He shall be called a Nazarene." There is no distinct prophecy of this kind in the Old Testament. It is suggested that it may refer to some lost prophecy. The most probable explanation is that it is a play upon the Hebrew

word *netzer*, "a branch," a title by which Isaiah designates the Messiah (11. 1).

#### THE UNCHRONICLED CHILDHOOD.

Matthew gives no account of the childhood or youth of Jesus after the return to Nazareth. From that point he passes without mention the nearly thirty years intervening, and introduces Jesus at his baptism and the opening of his public ministry (3. 13). Concerning the first eleven years of his life at Nazareth Luke makes the general but beautiful statement, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him" (2. 40). And then he records the solitary incident given of the whole period between his infancy and manhood, the story of the lesson.

The apocryphal gospels abound in legends and grotesque inventions concerning this period. They have no historic value. But we have enough information to enable us to construct a sufficiently clear idea of the nature of his life in the sacred home. Nazareth, we know, was located in one of the most charming spots in northern Palestine, so that Jesus grew up in the midst of the most delightful natural scenery. His mother and foster father were devout people, made increasingly so, we may be sure, by the circumstances associated with the birth of Jesus. Mary's religious interest is indicated in her going to the annual feasts, though not legally required to do so. They belonged to the class of self-respecting and independent poor, in no sense paupers. Joseph was a carpenter and trained Jesus in the same trade. Then we are to remember that Jesus had at least four brothers and two sisters. It is supposed that Joseph died not many years after the incident of the lesson, in which case several of the other children were but a few years younger than Jesus.

Nazareth was "one of the great centers of temple life," and companies of priests gathered there to go up to Jerusalem to serve in their course. This contributed to the religious educational advantages of the place. It was also on one of the great caravan routes leading to Damascus, and so was kept in constant touch with the outside world of trade and secular life. But, for some cause, Nazareth had an evil name, as is implied by the words of Nathaniel, who lived at Cana, only a few miles distant, "Can there any good come out of Nazareth?" and the fact that "Nazareth" was regarded as a term of reproach.

It is not probable that Jesus attended any school, as village schools, it is thought, were not established at that time. His instruction was, therefore, in his home, and chiefly, we may suppose, by his mother. He must have been taught

the Hebrew language in his home, and was accustomed to hear the law read in the sacred language in the services of the synagogue. He also spoke the Greek language. So his childhood and youth were spent in the sweet simplicity of a village home, among other children, under the care and instruction of wise and devout parents, disciplined to the daily toil of an artisan, carefully instructed in the Scriptures, and faithfully attending upon the services of the Sabbath. It was a gradual, natural, wholesome human development; but through it all "the grace of God was upon him," and he "increased in stature, and in favor with God and man."

#### "THE SON OF THE LAW."

Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem every year to the passover feast. They may many times before have taken Jesus with them, but this year his going was required, for at the age of twelve a Jewish boy became "a son of the law," subject to all its requirements and entitled to all religious privileges. The outward badge of this new dignity was the phylactery which he was then permitted to wear. If it were Jesus's first visit to Jerusalem, the experience must have been to him most interesting and impressive. Evidently he became absorbed in the services and instruction of the temple, and tarried behind when his parents started on their homeward journey. They found him on the third day sitting at the feet of some of the rabbis, in one of the temple chambers, listening to them and asking them questions. His wisdom astonished them. His mother's chiding was mingled with sorrow and wonder. It implied that he had never been lacking in filial consideration, and that she could not understand this apparent exception. The Revised Version gives his reply correctly: "How is it that ye sought me?" [That is, "Why did you look for me anywhere else than here?"] "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" His tarrying was not due to deliberate disregard for what, had he reflected, he must have known would have been contrary to his parents' wishes. He had become deeply preoccupied, mentally and spiritually absorbed, and so oblivious to the passing of time and all else. His answer satisfied his mother, though it had the old note of mystery in it that she could not understand. She hid the saying in her heart, along with other sacred things upon which she pondered. The strange boy cheerfully returned to Nazareth and was subject to them. But we may be sure that every year thereafter the growing youth, with the recurring passovers, visited with deepening interest "his Father's house."

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## Thoughts for Young People.

**Lessons from Jesus's Youthful Growth.**

1. *Jesus's physical growth has its lessons for us.* It is an old proverb that a sound mind needs a sound body to maintain it. Young people who are careless of nature's laws inevitably suffer the penalty. No one can wrong his body, or even suffer from any physical infirmity, without a lessening of his intellectual vigor and his moral force. Our bodies are talents intrusted to us by our heavenly Father, and we should hold them as sacred to his service as our minds or our souls.

2. *Jesus's intellectual development is a model for us.* God might have endowed him at the outset with infinite knowledge. His increase in wisdom is a beautiful illustration of the divine purpose that the Messiah should be in very truth the Son of man, developing from the weakness and ignorance of infancy to the strength and wisdom of maturity. Your mind has been intrusted to you by the same kind God. Develop your intellect.

3. *Jesus grew in his spiritual nature.* He had no sin to repent, no faults to amend; but his youth was formative as our young days are, and as really probationary as ours. His temptations were as real. His youth presented a threefold growth to the eyes of God and man. Let yours do the same.

## By Way of Illustration.

*The silent years at Nazareth.* What would we not give to know the habits, the friendships, the thoughts, the words, and the actions of Jesus during so many years from infancy to ministry? Only one flower of anecdote has been thrown over the wall of the hidden garden, and it is so exquisite as to fill us with intense longing to see the garden itself. But it has pleased God, whose silence is no less wonderful than his words, to keep it shut.—*Stalker.*

*Going up to Jerusalem.* There is something delightful about the intense, quiet excitement of a thoughtful boy for the first time admitted to any knowledge of the world.

April was passover month, and Palestine was at her blossom. The boy's first sight of the world was a dream of delight. A subdued and happy excitement pervaded the company. The caravan route became crowded with people. At night the tent was struck in a strange place. Every man's face turned toward the city when he prayed—the sacred city which the young Jesus had never seen, but of which he had dreamed. On the fourth day the massive city walls came in sight, and the outlines of the temple, gleaming gold and flashing white marble. Shouts rent the air—"Jerusalem! Jerusalem!"

As the throngs climbed the sacred hills they sang the famous songs of ascent written by David, their king. A trained flute player led the exultant music. All through the days and nights of this great festival the boy took on, like a sensitive plate, the finest lines and shades and lights of the stirring and solemn scenes to which he was for the first time admitted.—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

## Heart Talks on the Lesson.

There is meaning in the silence of the Scripture record of the life of Jesus from infancy to boyhood. Nothing is told of him in the gospels from the time he came from Egypt to Nazareth with his mother and Joseph, after the death of Herod, until he was twelve years old. Stories have been invented by other writers; miracles of the most trivial kind are attributed to him; but their silliness shows their human origin. The evangelists only say that he grew, waxed strong, increased in wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him, and that he lived with his parents and was subject to them. He was a real boy; his human growth and development was like that of any other child. He learned to speak, think, read, like other children. The only difference between him and other children was that he was sinless, because God dwelt in him. I cannot explain that mystery. We accept it because we are so taught in the inspired word. And because he was human, like ourselves, and yet was God, he can save us from sin so that God will dwell in us, and our lives can be as blameless, though not as perfect, as his own.

From what we know of the time and place where Jesus lived we may suppose that he went to school like other boys. There were free public schools in every village in Palestine, not furnished with desks, as ours are, but where the children sat on the floor, as they still do in the East, and repeated in a loud voice whatever the teacher told them. Since it is said he "increased in wisdom," we know what sort of a scholar he was. He understands the trials of a schoolboy; he can help us all in our studies and in every difficulty if we lift our hearts to him. Isn't it blessed to think how perfectly he understands and sympathizes with us? For little children, boys and girls, men and women, "hallelujah, what a Saviour!"

When he was twelve years old a great event occurred in his quiet life. He went to Jerusalem at the time of the passover, when the city was full of people from all parts of the world. It was for him just what a first visit to a great festival would be for us. The journey was through a beautiful country, with many friends and ac-

quaintances. Jerusalem was of great historic interest for one familiar with the history of his race; the home of prophets and kings of whom he had read in the book of the law, a book no doubt well studied in the home of Joseph and Mary. Above all, the temple, with its worship, and the schools of the rabbis must have been most attractive to such a boy as Jesus. This visit was an awakening. Whether or not he had had before this time any consciousness of his divine mission we do not know. But it broke upon him with new light in the rites of the passover, and while he talked with the wise men in the temple.

When his mother, missing him from the company on their homeward journey, anxiously looked for him a whole day and at last found him, "hearing and answering questions," he asked her, in surprise, "Why did you seek me? Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?" But while he saw his mission as the Son of God, he nevertheless returned with his parents to Nazareth, was subject to them, lived and worked with them "in the daily round, the common task," until the time came for his wider ministry among men. He was about his Father's business then no less than when in the temple, and no doubt he was as earnest in his work at the carpenter's bench as he was in his questions with the rabbis. In all things it behooved him to be like us; in all things let us try to be like him.

It is a great hour for us when we awake to the consciousness that we are children of God. We live when we feel all honest work is his business, to be done faithfully as in his sight and with his blessing. This lifts us above the level of the commonplace, and fills all lonely places with a sense of sweet companionship.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Make a sketch map of Palestine. Let the teachers trace the journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem.... Brief word pictures of the scenes of the journey, and of probable characteristics of the caravan.... Make clear the occasion of this visit: what this feast stood for; who ordinarily participated in it; how it was celebrated; studies of the "doctors," etc.... The customs connected with a Hebrew boy becoming a "son of the law.".... This lesson might be effectively studied in four scenes: (1) The caravan; (2) The festival city; (3) The departure; (4) Discovery of Jesus in the temple.... Lessons from the growth of Jesus. (See Thoughts for Young People.) Every youth should grow as he grew, in stature, wisdom, strength of spirit, general favor, and the

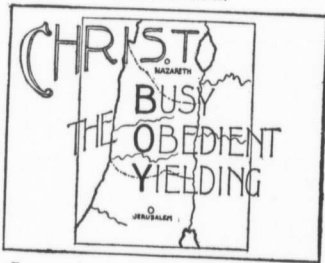
grace of God. Emphasize this. At no period of his life was he more really an exemplar than when he thus combined scrupulous attention to his heavenly Father's business, with subjection to his parents.... The accounts of Jewish child life in Farrar, Edersheim, and Staffer should be read if possible.... Spend no time on doubtful questions.... Make plain how easily a boy might stray away from his parents in such a city at such a time without blame attachable to either.... A good opportunity to impress the duty of obedience to parents.... Influences which affected Jesus's growth: 1. Rural life; 2. Bred in the working class of society; 3. A godly home; 4. Worship in the synagogue, and after the age of twelve at the feasts in Jerusalem; 5. Study of the Old Testament Scriptures; 6. The grace of God.... Traits of Jesus manifested in boyhood: 1. Natural, human, boylike; 2. Intelligent, "filled with wisdom;" 3. Godly, "about his Father's business;" 4. Obedient, "subject unto his parents;" 5. Popular, "increased in favor."

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Jesus, where'er thy people meet.  
Lord, this day thy children meet.  
Grace! 'tis a charming sound.  
O God, my youth is thine.  
Growing up for Jesus.

Lord of the worlds above.  
How sweet the place of prayer.  
Heavenly Father, send thy blessing.  
Learning of Jesus.  
Look up, look up to Jesus.

### Blackboard.



Even as a boy Christ was conscious of his divine mission, and when taken by Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem he sought the great temple and sat in the midst of the doctors, both hearing

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them and asking them questions. So busy was he about his Father's business that he tarried behind as his parents returned from the holy city. But when, after a long and anxious search, they found their child he went obediently with them to the humble home at Nazareth, yielded cheerfully to their wishes, and was subject unto them. May we all walk in the steps of Jesus and render to our earthly parents the honor and obedience which he showed to his.

*Israel*, vol. vi, page 179. Geikie, *New Testament Hours*, vol. i (index).

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD.—The various lives of Christ. Also Goulburn, *The Gospel of the Childhood*. Glover, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*. Wallace, *The Boyhood of Jesus*.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK: Ver. 44, Caravans, 64; A day's journey, 315; The first day's journey, 753. Ver. 46, The "doctors," 648; The temple, 704; Teachers and disciples, 754.

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### SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 46.—Wiseman, Cardinal, "Our Saviour in the Temple," *Sermons on our Lord Jesus Christ, and on His Blessed Mother*, page 47.

Verse 49.—Danley, W. S., "The Ideal Earnest Life," *The Homiletic Review*, Oct., 1897, page 329.

## LESSON III. THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. [Jan. 21.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Luke 3. 4.

### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[May be used as a Temperance Lesson. Read Mal. 3. 1-7; 4. 1-6.]

Luke 3. 1-17. [Commit to memory verses 3-6.]

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Ly-sanna the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 An'nas and Cai'aphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 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?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have A'bra-ham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto A'bra-ham.

9 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

### REVISED VERSION.

- 1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and
- 2 Ly-sanna's tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of An'nas and Cai'aphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the region round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins;
- 4 as it is written in the book of the words of I-saiah the prophet,  
The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,  
Make his paths straight.
- 5 Every valley shall be filled,  
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low;  
And the crooked shall become straight,  
And the rough ways smooth;
- 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
- 7 He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have A'bra-ham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto A'bra-ham.
- 9 And even now is the ax also laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do?



10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 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:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

**Time.**—The summer of A. D. 29. **Place.**—The country about the Jordan.

#### Home Readings.

*M.* The Preaching of John the Baptist. Luke 3. 1-9.

*Tu.* The Preaching of John the Baptist. Luke 3. 10-17.

*W.* Malachi's prophecy. Mal. 4.

*Th.* John's testimony. John 1. 15-28.

*F.* Repentance necessary. Matt. 3. 1-12.

*S.* Fruits of repentance. Eph. 4. 25-32.

*S.* A voice in the wilderness. Isa. 40. 1-8.

#### Lesson Hymns.

No. 19, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all thy quickening powers.

No. 98, New Canadian Hymnal.

Depth of mercy, can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?

No. 54, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, every soul by sin oppressed,  
There's mercy with the Lord.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. *The Beginning of John's Career*, v. 1-3.

Tell the story of the announcement of John's birth to Zacharias in the temple.

11 And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do

12 likewise. And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Master,

13 what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. And soldiers also asked him,

14 saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither exact anything wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the

16 Christ; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water;

17 but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

18 What is the meaning of "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins?"

19 What was the general condition of morals at the time of Christ's advent?

20 Were the worst transgressors hostile or friendly to the Church of that day?

21 *John's Career Foretold*, v. 4-6.

22 Find the passage in Isaiah here quoted.

23 Has this prophecy yet been fulfilled?

24 *The Gist of John's Message*, v. 7-9.

25 Of what "wrath to come" may John have had prophetic vision?

26 What did John demand of men who preferred repentance?

27 What simple ceremony did he perform?

28 Of what was this typical?

29 Was it novel among the Jews, or familiar?

30 By what figure did he make plain the nearness of God's judgment?

31 *John's Practical Advice for Daily Living*, v. 10-14.

32 How did he tell all his hearers to act?

33 Who were the publicans?

34 What was their usual character?

35 What did John command them not to do?

36 Who were the soldiers of that time?

37 What was John's threefold instruction to them?

38 *John Preparing the Way of the Lord*, v. 15-17.

39 What did some of John's hearers imagine concerning him?

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How did he say the mightier One should baptize them?

How did John's worth compare with that of Jesus in John's estimation?

To what does "fire" here allude?

What sort of fan is here referred to?

How do oriental farmers "purge their floors"?

How old was John now?

Amid what surroundings had his youth been spent?

### Teachings of the Lesson.

1. If all the axes that are already "laid unto the roots of the trees" could be seen by the rising generation, many a bad habit would be suddenly broken. God's judgments are infallible.

2 The gist of practical Christianity is doing good. He that has more than he needs of this world's goods should at once impart them to him that hath none. Everyone asks, What shall I do? and John answers, as every Christian minister is forced to answer, Do your duty; your simple routine duty.

3. The world divides itself on the question of Christianity; the sheep and the goats range themselves on the right hand and on the left instinctively. The presence of the mighty One, whose fan is in his hand, divides the wheat from the chaff.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. *The Beginning of John's Career*, v. 1-3.

When John came, what was the name of the governor of Judæa?

What part had he afterward in our Lord's crucifixion?

What was the name of the tetrarch of Galilee?

What part had he in that crucifixion?

Who were the high priests?

What part had they?

What did John do through all the country about Jordan?

2. *John's Career Foretold*, v. 4-6.

Who had foretold that the word of God would come to him?

Can you find the words here quoted in the Old Testament?

What was meant by "preparing a way" and "making the paths straight"?

When was the promise of verse 6 fulfilled?

3. *The Gist of John's Message*, v. 7-9.

What can you tell about John's parents, birth, and early history?

Where did he preach? Matt. 3. 1; John 1. 28.

What did he say to the multitude? Verse 7.

To what people were these words especially spoken? Matt. 3. 7.

What are "fruits worthy of repentance"?

What is true repentance?

Of what did he warn the people?

4. *John's Practical Advice for Daily Living*, v. 10-14.

What question was asked John?

What did he tell the people to do?

How did this command illustrate 1 John 3. 17?

How may we follow this command?

What two classes of people came to John?

Who were "the publicans"?

What command did he give them?

What publican afterward became a disciple of Jesus? Matt. 9. 9.

What vow did another publican make? Luke 19. 8.

What was John's command to the soldiers?

What was meant by this command?

5. *John Preparing the Way of the Lord*, v. 15-17.

What did the people think concerning John?

Why did they think that he might be the Christ?

What did John say to the people concerning himself?

Who did he say would come?

What spirit did his words show?

What warning did he give concerning Christ?

To what two kinds of people did this refer?

To which class should all seek to belong?

### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That we must repent?

2. That we must live righteously?

3. That we must believe in Christ?

4. That we must be baptized with the Holy Ghost?

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How old was Jesus when he began to preach?

What do we know about Jesus's life in Nazareth after his visit to Jerusalem? Mark 6. 3; Luke 2. 52.

Where is the story of John's coming told? Luke 1.

Who was John?

What was the work of a prophet? *To tell what God made known to him.*

How did John begin his great work? *By preaching to the people.*

What did he show them? *Their sins.*

Who did he say was coming?

Whom did he baptize?

What did Jesus do when he heard of John's preaching?

Why did Jesus allow John to baptize him?  
Matt. 3. 15.

Do you know what happened after the baptism of Jesus?

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. How had the prophet Isaiah spoken of John the Baptist? *As the voice of one crying in the wilderness.*

2. What was the special mission of John the Baptist? GOLDEN TEXT: "Prepare ye," etc.

3. What did John say to those who came forth to be baptized? "*Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.*"

4. What did John tell the soldiers and publicans and other people that asked him what to do? *Do right and be kind.*

5. What did he say the mightier One that was to come would do? "*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*"

### NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

18. Into what estate did the fall of our first parents bring on all mankind?

The fall of our first parents brought all mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Romans v. 18, 19.

## THE LESSON OUTLINE.

### The Preacher in the Wilderness.

#### I. AN INSPIRED PREACHER.

*The word of God came.* v. 2.

Hear...at my mouth. Ezek. 33. 7.

A prophet? Yea. Matt. 11. 7-9.

#### II. A PREACHER OF REPENTANCE.

*Preaching...repentance.* v. 3.

Saying, Repent ye. Matt. 3. 2.

Except ye repent...perish. Luke 13. 3.

#### III. A SCRIPTURAL PREACHER.

*As it is written.* vs. 4-6.

Out of the book. Isa. 34. 16.

Saying none other things. Acts 26. 22.

#### IV. A FEARLESS PREACHER.

*Generation of vipers.* v. 7.

Fear them not. Ezek. 3. 8, 9.

Open my mouth boldly. Eph. 6. 19, 20.

#### V. A PRACTICAL PREACHER.

1. *Fruits worthy of repentance.* v. 8.

Cease to do evil. Isa. 1. 16.

2. *Let him impart.* v. 11.

Hath this world's goods. 1 John 3. 17.

3. *Do violence to no man.* v. 14.

Love worketh no ill. Rom. 13. 10.

#### VI. AN EVANGELICAL PREACHER.

*One mightier than I.* v. 16.

Behold the Lamb of God. John 1. 29.

Jesus Christ...crucified. 1 Cor. 2. 2.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

The boy of Nazareth has now become a man, probably a carpenter, toiling in the shop of his foster father; and probably none but his mother holds in vivid memory the supernatural events of his past, or cherishes great expectations concerning his future. During these thirty years the child of Zacharias and Elisabeth has been growing up in the wild regions of southern Judea or Perea, communing with God, filling his soul with the ancient prophecies free from the interpretations of the schools, and drawing inspiration from the pure air of the desert. At last the hour foretold by the angel in the temple, and long before upon the prophetic scrolls of Isaiah and Malachi, has arrived. The silence of four centuries is broken, and once more the voice of a prophet rings throughout the land. From city and from village, far and near, the people press toward the plain of Jordan, just north of the Dead Sea; and there they behold this newly appointed messenger, like Elijah of old, clad in rough garments, and bearing upon face and figure the tokens of a self-denying life. His message is of rebuke for the sins of the people, and he calls men to repentance, not in outward forms alone, but in deeds of uprightness and mercy. He proclaims that Israel's Messiah-king, long expected, is standing at the gates, with the winning fan to sift the chaff from among the wheat, and with the baptism of fire for those who shall be found worthy.

**Verses 1, 2.** *Tiberius Cesar* succeeded Augustus Cesar in Rome. *Pontius Pilate*, mentioned here as *governor of Judea*, and *Herod* (Antipas), mentioned as *tetrarch of Galilee*, and *Annas and Caiaphas*, mentioned as *high priests*, all of them held office throughout our Lord's ministry and were concerned with his trial and death. They were,

all four, conscienceless men. Pontius Pilate was an arbitrary, venal Roman, without any great ability; Herod Antipas was a luxurious, sensual despot of a type frequent in oriental history; Annas and Caiaphas were ecclesiastical politicians, who have had their duplicates in Christian history as well as in Jewish and pagan. *Tetrarch*

means "governors have their reigns *Trochontis, Galilee. The prophetic in strange stilled which stretc the northern vision of the are not told.*

3. *He came high and re by shepherd great roads John's soliti place for the ing. The bap sins. The du of forgiveness bol of both.*

4, 5. *As it from Isaiab. ness. Of Heb dramatic. In career of a f hot words ring asks his con the unborn p Lord. These to the abomin and the pen are prepared high rank. keep public Farmers habi fields and cast the sultan or guests is abou are prepared grand scale.*

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7. *Then said words are in ha prophet. To th all classes, Ph soldiers, publi every part of t 3. 7) the rebu directed agains it applied to ot*

means "governor of a quarter." Philip and Ly-sandias have no part in the gospel story except as their reigns are convenient to date from; *Turea*, *Trachonitis*, and *Abilene* were provinces near to Galilee. *The word of God*. Or, as we would now say, prophetic inspiration. *Zacharias*. A priest whose strange story is told in Luke 1. *The wilderness*. The untilled and rocky margin of the Holy Land which stretches across lower Judea, but rounds the northern end of the Dead Sea. In which division of the wilderness John made his home we are not told.

3. *He came into all the country about Jordan*. A high and relatively barren region, ranged over by shepherds and their flocks, and intersected by great roads which led to and from great cities. John's solitude became a matchless gathering place for the multitudes. *Preaching*. Proclaiming. *The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*. The duty of repentance and the privilege of forgiveness, and the use of baptism as a symbol of both.

4, 5. *As it is written*. Here comes a citation from Isaiah. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness*. Of Hebrew prophets Isaiah was the most dramatic. Instead of prosaically foretelling the career of a frontier evangelist, he hears John's hot words ringing back through the centuries, and asks his contemporaries to heed the appeal of the unborn preacher. *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*. These words and those of verse 5 allude to the abominable roads of the Orient in all ages, and the peremptory manner in which these roads are prepared for the progress of some official of high rank. There is never any care taken to keep public roads in order for common use. Farmers habitually gather the stones from their fields and cast them into the highway; but when the sultan or one of his honored officers or guests is about to make an official tour the roads are prepared by forced labor, and often on a grand scale.

6. *All flesh shall see the salvation of God*. No confines of geography or of race shall limit the advance of the kingdom of heaven.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

7. *Then said he*. "He used to say." And his words are in harmony with the words of Esaias the prophet. *To the multitude*. His hearers embraced all classes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, scribes, soldiers, publicans, and common people, from every part of the Holy Land. Elsewhere (Matt. 3. 7) the rebuke which follows is especially directed against the Pharisees and Sadducees, but it applied to others also, for the opinions of the

people and prevalent views of religion were controlled by the official few. *Came forth*. From the populous parts to the wilderness. *To be baptized*. Baptism was not unknown to the Jews, for Gentiles embracing Judaism were baptized. But by declaring that the orthodox children of Abraham, like the vilest of heathen, needed to repent and be baptized, John taught that they had lost their Judaic birthright by sin, and could never enter the kingdom of heaven except on the same plane with their heathen neighbors. People by the thousand bowed before John's denunciations and did as he prescribed. The nation was profoundly stirred. *Generation of vipers*. "Brood of serpents." These children of Abraham, sole inheritors of the covenant, in true character were serpents, poisoned themselves and poisonous also in their influence—a fitting characterization of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And it is a singular evidence of John's overwhelming popularity that even two years after his death its representatives did not dare to deny his divine authorization for fear of mob violence. In all ages none are so harmful as those who possess the form of godliness without its power. *The wrath to come*. Wrath was impending over the nation as a whole, and over sinners as individuals. The faithful teacher does not hesitate to warn of God's wrath as well as to proclaim his mercy.

8. *Fruits worthy of repentance*. Not mere faithfulness to outward forms of worship, but just conduct and righteous character were regarded by John as the best preparations for the Lord's coming. *Repentance* means "a change of purpose," a newness of aim in life, a reformation from the inside out. *Begin not to say*. Do not even begin; do not attempt to excuse yourselves. *We have Abraham*, "and not vipers," to [for] our father. But not the virtue of even their great father's faith can save them from "the wrath to come;" salvation must come through personal faith and faithfulness. Salvation is not an inheritance of birth, but an individual possession by faith. *Of these stones to raise up children*. He referred not only to the pebbles on Jordan's shore, but probably to the Gentiles also, stone-dead in sins, yet destined to become the true children of Abraham.

9. *The ax is laid unto the root*. A warning of coming doom. A pruning knife for the branches was a symbol of discipline, but an ax at the root betokens utter destruction. *Every tree*. Each tree stood for an individual. Each man stands before God's eye to be judged singly as if he were the only man in the universe. *Good fruit*. Not leaves, nor blossoms, but fruit of personal character in deeds of goodness is the divine require-

ment. *Hewn down.* The temporal destruction of the nation and the eternal woe of the guilty among its people are both here foreshadowed.

10, 11. *The people.* His words surprise the people, whose conception of religion was of forms, sacrifices, tithings, and minute legalisms, and who could not see the close relation between worship and practical morality. *What shall we do?* "They that would do their duty must seek to know their duty."—*M. Henry.* These people needed training in morals before they could comprehend the deeper principle of love which Christ was to lay down. *Two coats.* "Two tunics;" the inner garment worn next to the skin, a sort of shirt reaching to the knees. *Let him impart.* That is, let each one, even the poorer class, if he possesses more than is absolutely necessary, endeavor to do good to others, who are less favored. *Meal.* Any kind of food. *Do likewise.* Let benevolence, and not selfishness, be the law of life.

12, 13. *Publicans.* These were the collectors of the revenue, appointed by higher officials of the Roman government. As the assessments and collections were made by the same persons, with none to audit their accounts, there was great temptation to wrong the helpless people, and the publicans generally deserved their bad reputation. It shows the universal reach of John's influence that such as these came for baptism. Even in the temptations of office a man may be a servant of God. *Appointed you.* No more than each taxpayer should be justly compelled to pay for the support of the State.

14. *Soldiers.* Soldiers were then employed as a sort of police to keep the people in check, and in foreign wars. These may have been Romans; there is no certainty about it. *Do violence to no man.* Soldiers in ancient times often plundered the people among whom they were quartered. *Accuse any falsely.* Sometimes soldiers accused wealthy citizens of disaffection, as an excuse for seizing their goods, and sometimes they extorted blackmail by threatening to accuse them. *Content with your wages.* The word here includes rations of food as well as money. In every calling there is a chance to show forth the Christian character.

15. *In expectation.* "Suspense." It was an age of expectancy, when men's hearts were prepared to receive a divine messenger. *Mused in their hearts.* "Reasoned, debated." No man

could speak such words without raising the deepest thoughts on the part of those who heard him. *Whether he were the Christ.* There was a universal belief that the "seventy weeks" of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9. 24) were completed, and that the hour for Messiah's coming had arrived. It is not wonderful that such a messenger, whose words bore the stamp of a divine authority, should be mistaken for the king himself.

16. *John answered.* His answer shows a deep humility, reverence, and self-denial. *Unto them all.* His denial of Messiahship was open and public. (See John 1. 17-27.) *I . . . baptize you.* As a token of renunciation of sin and sincere turning to God. *Mightier than I.* In that Christ performed what John promised; wrought miracles in proof of his authority; and bestowed the higher blessings of the new covenant. *Latchet of whose shoes.* To stoop down and unloose the thong binding the sandal to the foot was the office of a servant whenever a noble guest entered the house. Thus the greatest prophet and preacher of his day announces himself as infinitely below the rank of the coming Saviour. So let every preacher and teacher hide himself behind Christ. *With the Holy Ghost.* The direct endowment of power from on high; fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 1-4), and still the possession of the Christian believer. *With fire.* Referring apparently, not as in verse 9 and afterward in verse 17, to the fate of the ungodly, but to the fiery tongues of Pentecost, which some of those present in John's audience (Peter, John, Andrew, etc., see John 1. 40) were destined to receive, or, at least, to the gifts of zeal and power which those fiery tongues symbolized.

17. *Whose fan.* In the East grain is winnowed, being thrown up in the air by one man, while another waves a large fan to and fro to drive away the chaff. *Purge his floor.* That is, figuratively, to separate the precious from the worthless in the nation; the one to become the founders of Christianity, the other to be scattered abroad on the earth. *His garner.* This was generally a pit in the earth or in the rock. Here it represents the true Church of Christ on earth, not merely the organized churches, all of which must necessarily contain some chaff as well as wheat. *Fire unquenchable.* An expression whose fullest meaning we may not comprehend, yet pointing to a terrible hereafter for the impenitent.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

THE SILENCE PRECEDING THE "VOICE."  
If the evangelists record little concerning the childhood and early life of Jesus, they record still less concerning his forerunner. We are

given one incident in Christ's boyhood and one utterance of his, but of John no incident and no word. All of the four evangelists give some account of John's public ministry, but only Luke

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records the incident associated with his birth. But from that hour, on the day of his circumcision, when his father, temporarily and provisionally deaf and dumb, wrote, "His name is John," nothing is told us of his history except that "the hand of the Lord was with him," and that he "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." The "voice crying in the wilderness" broke the silence of thirty years.

## SERVANT AND MASTER.

Comparison of John's early life with that of Jesus reveals more contrasts than resemblances. Their coming into the world was alike in this, that they were each of them "sent" on a divinely appointed mission (Gal. 4. 4; John 1. 6). The conception of each, though differing in nature, was miraculous, the angel Gabriel making the annunciation, in the one case to the father, in the other to the mother. Their parents were alike righteous and devout people, and their mothers were cousins. But Zacharias was a priest and Joseph was a carpenter. Jesus grew up in the northern province, John in the hill country south of Jerusalem. John in the very promise of his birth (Luke 1. 15) was dedicated to the rigid life of a Nazarite, and in the latter years preceding the beginning of his ministry lived in ascetic solitude in the wilderness; while Jesus never departed from the natural and simple life of the ordinary home. Jesus's childhood and youth were spent in association with brothers and sisters, while John was as "a root out of a dry ground," the solitary child of parents "well stricken in years" when he was born. We are not to think of John, however, as having been from his childhood in the wilderness, uninstructed and cut off from association with and knowledge of the world. It is probable that his parents, though old when he was born, lived long enough to instruct him carefully in religious knowledge, while his preaching shows that he was familiar with the state of the society of his times, and with the characteristics of its different classes. It is not necessary to suppose that his retirement into the wilderness took place until he had reached mature years.

## AN IMPORTANT DATE FIXED.

Luke is the only one of the evangelists who furnishes us with precise data for fixing important dates. In many particulars we observe that he had more than the others the historian's habit of giving the settings of events which he describes, of setting forth things "in order" (1. 3). In his account of the circumstances of the birth of Christ, for instance, he is not content with the general statement that the decree for taxing (or

enrollment) was made by Cæsar Augustus, but adds that it was "when Cyrenius was governor of Syria" (2. 1, 2). So in the present case he fixes the time of the beginning of the public ministry of the Baptist with great exactness. He says it was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, evidently including the two years during which Tiberius ruled jointly with his uncle, Augustus, which was in the Roman year 779, or A. D. 27. But in addition to this he gives the conjunction of provincial rulers—Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod, of Galilee; Phillip, tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis; and Lysanias, of Abilene. Then to make it still more definite he gives the ecclesiastical situation—Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. It has been suggested that Luke was thus precise about describing the historical situation at the time of the beginning of John's ministry because John introduced the ministry of Jesus, and that Luke may have had in mind the prophecy, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." As it has been well said, he "introduces foreign emperors, tetrarchs, and governors, that they may ring a muffled peal over the grave of a dead nation, a funeral knell, which, however, shall be the signal for the coming of Shiloh, and the gathering of the people unto Him."

## THE SECOND ELIJAH.

It was more than four hundred years since the "word of the Lord" had come unto a prophet in Israel. The old prophetic cry, so long suppressed, broke from the lips of John with ringing and startling suddenness. Malachi (3. 1; 4. 5), whose voice died out into four centuries of silence, foresaw the coming of John, the second Elijah, running before the approaching King "even as Elijah ran before Ahab to the ivory palace at Jezreel, his voice then dying away in silence, as he himself passes out of sight behind the throne." Jesus distinctly declared that in John Malachi's prophecy was fulfilled (Matt. 11. 10, 14). There is nothing to indicate that John was aware that he was this second Elijah. In fact, he distinctly denied that he was such (John 1. 21). He seems indeed to be unconscious that he was a prophet at all, for the second question of the deputation of the Jews which came to him was, "Art thou a prophet?" (not "that prophet"); and he answered, "No." He thought not of what he was except that he was a "voice" charged with a message. But Jesus declared, "This is Elijah which is to come." There was in John the least of self-consciousness. Great as his personality was, it was completely merged in the greatness of his mission. He thought not at all of what he was, but wholly of what he was sent to do.

## THE DIVINE THRILL.

The hearts of men responded to the wilderness call of John. The world never fails to recognize the voice of a true prophet. When God speaks hearts are thrilled. Platitudes, formalities, materialities, neutralities, verbal orthodoxies that are practical atheisms, tremble and shiver when an Elijah speaks. A cathedral may be empty where merely a self-appointed or a man-appointed talker speaks; but the wilderness will be thronged where a God-commissioned herald summons men to hear. They may not heed; but they must hear. And John's summons, alike to rabbis, common people, publicans, and soldiers, was to repentance, and works worthy of repentance. To such repentance he baptized them; but in doing so he announced the near approach of "one mightier" who would baptize them "with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

## Thoughts for Young People.

## How and Why to Repent.

1. *We should repent because there is a wrath to come.* Wisely did Mr. Wesley make desire to flee from that wrath the condition of union with his societies. Eternal justice punishes sin. We are all sinners, and should flee from its power and its penalty.
2. *We should repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* By repentance only may we enter. Christ winnows human souls. His fan is in his hand. By every moral responsibility we meet we are placing ourselves among the wheat or the chaff, among the citizens of the kingdom or its enemies.
3. *We should repent, for by that means only can we be evaded with the Holy Ghost.* All human beings are informed, "possessed," by the Spirit of God or the spirit of evil. By repentance we turn away from all evil influences, and then comes the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire.
4. *We should manifest our repentance by doing our daily duties with new zeal, as unto the Lord.* John did not tell publican, nor soldier, nor priest to leave his daily vocation, but to do the old duties from new and lofty principles. No penitent can be a lax or impure man.
5. *We should manifest our repentance by living for others.* He who does not with free heart contribute to the welfare of others not only lacks the spirit of Christ, but has not even got as far as John the Baptist.
6. *We should show our repentance by turning from the forerunner to the mighty One whom he announces.* Some of John's followers failed to become disciples of Jesus. And there are not wanting members of our modern churches whose

zeal seems to slacken when the personality that aroused them to repentance is withdrawn. Let us follow our ministers and teachers as they follow Christ.

## By Way of Illustration.

*John's mission.* He was, like Elijah, rough, strong, solitary. Such men are not ideal reformers, because their work is not complete. After Elijah came the gentler Elisha. And after John the Baptist we have Jesus, who combined perfectly the nature of both prophets. John's preaching reflected the imagery of the desert where he lived. He spoke of the rock, the serpent, the barren tree.

*John's fearlessness.* He dared to call the Pharisees and Sadducees a generation of vipers, reminding them that God can as easily make sons out of stones as out of a brood of vipers.

When Livingstone first showed a mirror to some tribes in Africa who had never seen one they shrunk back in anger, saying, "Am I so ugly as that?"

So the faithful preacher who holds up the mirror of God's law will arouse consternation.

John's preaching was not denunciation, but warning. The man who cries "Fire!" at midnight, and arouses the people from their comfortable beds, and causes alarm and great activity to save life, is no enemy of the human race, but its best friend.

The comparison between the fruitless tree and the destruction of the Jewish nation was one which would appeal to them, because their fruitless trees were always cut down. In Palestine fruit trees are all taxed, so that a fruitless tree brings its owner into debt.—*Maclaren.*

*John's humility—a voice—a shoe bearer.* One day he was visited by an influential committee sent down from Jerusalem. They came to ask him if he was the Messiah. He certainly had a fine opportunity to pass himself off for the Christ. He replied, "I am a voice." Christ was the Word. How appropriate that John should be a voice to proclaim the Word! He was to be heard and not to be seen. Christ was the way. John was only a finger post pointing to the way.

In every oriental household there were several servants, and the lowliest one of them all was the one who removed the shoes and washed the feet of the family and guests. John declared that he was not worthy to bear the shoes of the coming One.

*Our unappreciated work may be our best.* It is not possible to tell just what our work is worth. Like those who tolled on the foundations of the Victoria Bridge, we may work down in the dark

caisson amid garments and the great city! will pass in centuries whose foundations are to-day may be your monument, the work who knows but way for one from is to lift this self —*C. A. Dickinson.*  
"He was a but went out, but no ness; his was which shines on light is lost in th of whose rising ton.

## Heart T

The identifica humanity has be lessons. But he our human friend Saviour. The an thing which shall the Son of God need not try to ex way for him to Saviour from sin, than to understand said, "Isn't it str yet he can come i heart at the same t into the kingdom w ties about which w John the Baptis pare the way for J come with blessed must hear and obey will not come until If you are wonder make you pure an power without any remember he is no work out his will in training character; companionship forc will, but brings w harmony with him what we can do fo have prepared the hearts and do for us "Every valley shall upon a low level— must change your p



caisson amid the mud and water, with smeared garments and weary hands, but in after years the great city's wealth and glory and industry will pass in ceaseless procession over the bridge whose foundations depend upon the work which we are to-day doing. Locusts and wild honey may be your food, rough camel's hair your raiment, the world may call you a nobody, and yet who knows but that you may be preparing the way for one fresh from the plains of heaven who is to lift this selfish world to heavenly altitudes?—*C. A. Dickinson.*

"*He was a burning and a shining light,*" and he went out, but not as a torch, in smoke and darkness; his was the light of the morning star, which shines on somewhere, though to us its light is lost in the greater effulgence of the sun, of whose rising it is the harbinger.—*W. E. Barton.*

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

The identification of Jesus with us in his humanity has been the leading thought in our lessons. But he was God as well as man. He is our human friend and brother; he is our divine Saviour. The angel said to Mary, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This is a great mystery; we need not try to explain it; but if we prepare the way for him to come into our hearts as our Saviour from sin, that will be far better for us than to understand all mysteries. A little boy said, "Isn't it strange that Jesus is a man, and yet he can come into my heart and everybody's heart at the same time?" Little children go easily into the kingdom without stumbling over difficulties about which we stop to reason.

John the Baptist was sent from God to prepare the way for Jesus. If we would have him come with blessed salvation into our hearts, we must hear and obey the preaching of John. He will not come until we are ready to receive him. If you are wondering why the Lord does not make you pure and good by the word of his power without any effort on your part, you must remember he is not making machines of us to work out his will in an irresponsible way. He is training character; he is making us fit for his companionship forever; not creatures without will, but beings with strong will in perfect harmony with himself. He will not do for us what we can do for ourselves; but when we have prepared the way he will come into our hearts and do for us beyond all we ask or think. "Every valley shall be filled." If you are living upon a low level—a selfish, worldly life—you must change your purpose; higher aims must

move you; you must lift your thoughts to better, purer, nobler things. Jesus cannot enter a heart filled with low, mean desires and choices. "Every mountain and hill shall be brought low." The pride and ambition which make you unwilling to do or to be what God wills for you must be brought down to a humility which says, "Not my will, but thine." "The crooked shall be made straight." There are many crooked things we must straighten before we can receive the Lord Jesus. There are wrong ways of making money; insincere customs of society; certain bad habits; not doing as you would that others should do to you; that sullen way of keeping uncomfortably still when you ought to speak, or breaking out in works that burn and hurt; all these and many more things we know are wrong must be given up before Jesus can come into our hearts. Not that we can overcome these things in our own strength. Many have tried, and failed. But we can choose to put them away; we can will to make a change; we can turn away from temptation; we can leave bad company and seek the companionship of the good; we can read pure books; we can read the Bible and listen to the preaching of the word; we can put ourselves in the way of being helped rather than hindered in right living.

John was very practical in his preaching. He laid the ax at the root of the tree. He said professions of goodness amounted to nothing unless the fruits were seen in men's daily doings. They must stop their selfish keeping two coats when a poor brother had none; they must share their meat with the hungry; they must be honest in business; considerate and kind toward everybody; they must not hurt the reputation of others; and they must be content with their providential lot. Let us consider carefully each sin he mentions. Is the way of Jesus in our hearts hindered by any of these?

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a map showing the early home and the preaching place of John the Baptist.... Explain the purpose of his ministry.... In what respect he was like Elijah.... His character as a preacher.... The kingdom of God as here presented: (1) Individual; (2) Requiring repentance; (3) Inviting all; (4) Demanding righteousness; (5) Having Christ as King.... Repentance: (1) Its necessity; (2) Its elements; (3) Its results; (4) Its rewards.... An outline for teaching: 1. Sketch the events of eighteen years that have passed since the last lesson. 2. Astonishing news! After four centuries of silence another prophet has come! Tell about John's birth, training, dress,



food, wild home. 3. The preaching place. Draw a map, showing the Dead Sea and the Jordan with the wilderness stretching on each side; mark Jericho, Bethabara, Jerusalem. 4. John's message: (1) Of repentance, change of purpose; (2) Of righteousness, genuine reform of conduct; (3) Of remission of sins, appropriated by faith and symbolized by baptism; (4) Of the Redeemer, "One cometh after me." 5. John's baptism. 6. John's character: (1) Unworldliness; (2) Singleness of aim; (3) Boldness; (4) Practicality in preaching; (5) Humility, self-surrender.

## OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Hasten, sinner, to be wise.  
Depth of mercy!  
So near to the kingdom!  
Why do you wait.  
Just as I am.

To-day the Saviour calls.  
The Saviour is calling.  
Come, every soul by sin oppressed.  
The Saviour calls.  
Jesus Christ is passing by.

## Library References.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Reynolds, *John the Baptist*. Houghton, *John the Baptist*. Duncan, *John the Baptist*. McCullagh, *The Peerless Prophet*. Evans, *Scripture Biography*, vol. ii, page 194. Payne, *Guides and Guards in Character Building*, page 213.

THE PUBLICANS.—Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. vi, page 54. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, vol. i, pages 246, 424.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK: Ver. 4, Preparing the way of the king, 513. Ver. 11, The tunic, 821. Ver. 16, The shoe latchet, 791; Shoes, 832. Ver. 17, Winnowing grain, 634.

## SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verses 4-6.—Anon., "Reform and Revival." *The Homiletic Review*, October, 1892, page 381.

## LESSON IV. THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS. [Jan. 28.]

GOLDEN TEXT. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3. 17.

[Compare Luke 3. 21, 22 with 4. 1-13.]

Matt. 3. 13 to 4. 11. [Commit to memory verses 16, 17.]

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

13 Then cometh Je'sus from Gal'i-lee to Jor'dan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

Hall, Thomas C., "The Temporal Kingdom," *The Power of an Endless Life*, page 167.

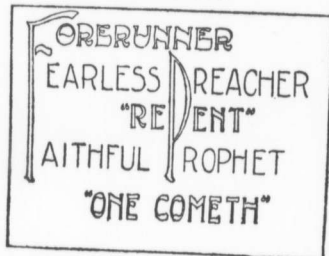
Verse 6.—Wiseman, Cardinal, "The Incarnation and Birth of Jesus Christ," *Sermons on Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother*, page 1.

Verse 7.—Deems, C. F., "No Room for Jesus," *The Treasury*, vol. iii, page 478.

Verses 10-14.—Potter, Bishop H. C., "Revival Agencies: Their Uses and Perils," *The Homiletic Review*, April, 1891, page 331.

Verses 12, 13.—Potter, Bishop H. C., "The Law of Exaction," *The Treasury*, vol. i, page 73.

## Blackboard.



The forerunner of our Lord came by the exclusion of the wilderness to prepare his way among men. The people were in intense expectation, and eager multitudes from all Judea gathered at Jordan to hear this fearless preacher who spared none and convinced all. "Repent" was the message with which he exhorted them to forsake their sins and to flee from the wrath to come. Then as all men united in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, he bore witness as a faithful prophet to the coming One, who should baptize them not alone with water, but with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Had Israel but recognized his mission and faithfully received his message, all flesh through him might have seen the salvation of God.

## REVISED VERSION.

13 Then cometh Je'sus from Gal'i-lee to the Jor'dan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And

15 And Je'sus it to be so now all righteousness

16 And Je'sus straightway c' were opened (God descend) him:

17 And thus is my beloved

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2 And when nights, he was

3 And when If thou be the stones be mad

4 But he ar Man shall not word that pro

5 Then the city, and sett

6 And saith God, cast thys shall give his and in their har any time thou c

7 Je'sus said Thou shalt not

8 Again, the ceeding high n the kingdoms them;

9 And saith u give thee, if thou

10 Then saith Sa'tan: for it is Lord thy God, an

11 Then the c angels came and

Time.—A. D. 2 Jordan. 2. The west of the north

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15 And Je'sus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Je'sus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

1 Then was Je'sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward ahungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Je'sus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Je'sus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

4 Then was Je'sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones

3 become bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that proceedeth out of the

5 mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If

6 thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

And on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them:

9 and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship

10 me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt

11 thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

#### No. 19, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all thy quickening powers;  
Kindle a frame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.

#### No. 36, New Canadian Hymnal.

I need thee every hour,  
Most gracious Lord;  
No tender voice like thine,  
Can peace afford.

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. *The Baptism of Our Lord*, v. 13-17.

Whence did Jesus come, and for what purpose?

What were the probable distance and route of the journey?

What objection did John raise?

How did Jesus overcome the objection?

What strange sight followed the baptism?

**Time.**—A. D. 26. **Places.**—1. The country about Jordan. 2. The wilderness, probably directly west of the north end of the Dead Sea.

### Home Readings.

M. The Baptism. Matt. 3. 13-17.

Ta. The Temptation. Matt. 4. 1-11.

W. The Father's testimony. Mark 1. 1-13.

Ta. The Son of God. John 1. 29-34.

F. Enduring temptation. James 1. 12-20.

S. Highly exalted. Phil. 2. 5-11.

S. Able to help. Heb. 2. 10-18.

### Lesson Hymns.

No. 20, New Canadian Hymnal.

Holy Spirit, faithful Guide,  
Ever near the Christian's side,  
Gently lead us by the hand,  
Pilgrims in a desert land.

What message was there first heard? GOLDEN TEXT.

Where and by whom were these words again heard?

What says Peter of this message? 2 Pet. 1. 17.

2. *The First Temptation*, v. 1-4.

Why was Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness?

Why was temptation necessary?

If led by the Spirit, was he tempted of God?

What was the one great purpose of the temptation?

What traits does he show in this lesson?

At what time does Satan tempt us?

What do we need that we may overcome him? Eph. 6. 11.

What special preparation had Jesus for this trial? Luke 4. 1.

What conditions favored the tempter?

What sins would yielding to the first temptation have involved?

How was it repelled?

3. *The Second Temptation*, v. 5-7.

Why was the second temptation especially crafty?

For what purpose did Satan quote Scripture?

With what weapon was his assault met? Eph.

6. 17.

What would have been the sin in yielding to this temptation?

4. *The Third Temptation*, v. 8-11.

What was the third suggestion?

To what sin was this an invitation?

How was the tempter again defeated?

What was the effect of all this temptation?

We know Jesus was hungry; was he ambitious?

Give a reason to support your answer.

There were three steps toward his triumph; find them.

What visitors took the tempter's place?

Was the defeat of the tempter final, or but temporary? Luke 4. 13.

To what should Jesus's temptation encourage us? Heb. 4. 14-16.

By what means may we defeat the tempter? James 4. 7.

### Teachings of the Lesson.

1. The beloved Son lacks no indorsement. The Holy Spirit anointed him; the Father approved him; the saints adore him; the devils fear and tremble. His name is "high over all."

2. Trial develops virtue. Temptations conquered are as Samson's lion—strength and sweetness. "Blessed is the man that endureth"—not escapes. The promise is to the overcomer (Rev. 2).

3. The word of God is our sure defense. It has an answer for every temptation. Wield "the sword of the Spirit" against every foe.

4. Our High Priest has conquered temptation. He can therefore succor us. He knows our trials; he will not "break the bruised reed." He will deliver the godly (2 Pet. 2. 9).

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. *The Baptism of Our Lord*, v. 13-17.

What unexpected applicant for baptism came to John?

What journey had Jesus taken?

What shows John's surprise?

How did Jesus remove John's scruples?

As Jesus came up from his baptism what opened to him?

What wonderful vision had John?

What did he subsequently say of this vision? John 1. 33, 34.

Whence did John hear a voice?

What did it say to him?

From whom did the voice proceed?

On what other occasion was similar testimony heard? Luke 9. 35.

When again did the Father testify to his Son? John 12. 28.

2. *The First Temptation*, v. 1-4.

Under what guidance did Jesus go to the wilderness?

For what purpose did he go?

What preliminary trial did he undergo?

What doubt did the tempter first suggest?

What test did he propose?

What did Jesus say as to the true source of life?

3. *The Second Temptation*, v. 5-7.

On what journey did the devil take Jesus?

What seat was given to Jesus?

What risk of life was he urged to take?

With what weapon did Jesus repel the tempter? Whom may we never tempt?

4. *The Third Temptation*, v. 8-11.

What journey was then taken?

What vision was shown?

What bribe was offered?

What did Jesus then call his tempter?

What sword thrust did the devil receive at parting?

What messengers came to Jesus when the devil left?

What service did they render?

Where again did an angel succor Jesus? Luke 22. 43.

What service are angels always ready to render? Heb. 1. 14.

Where in the  
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### QUES

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**Practical Teachings.**

Where in this lesson are we taught--

1. The duty of baptism ?
2. The divinity of Christ ?
3. The source of temptation ?
4. How to resist temptation ?
5. Where we may get help in temptation ?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

By whom was Jesus baptized ?

Why did the sinless Saviour allow himself to be baptized by John ?

Where did Jesus go after his baptism ?

Who led him into the wilderness ?

Why is it good for us that Jesus was tempted ?

Heb. 2. 18.

Where was the wilderness ? *Between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.*What kind of a place was it ? *A wild, rocky place.*

How long was Jesus there ?

What was he doing this long time ?

What was the first temptation ?

What did Satan try to get Jesus to do in this temptation ? *To think about self first.*

What was the second temptation ?

How did he try to bribe Jesus in the last temptation ?

Shall we be tempted as Jesus was ? *Yes, each one of us.*How shall we be able to meet temptation ? *By getting God's word into our hearts and minds.***THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

1. Who came to John to be baptized ? *Jesus.*
2. What came upon Jesus from the opened heavens ? *"The Spirit of God descending like a dove."*
3. What was said by the voice from heaven ? *GOLDEN TEXT : "This is," etc.*
4. Where was Jesus led by the Spirit after his baptism ? *"Into the wilderness."*
5. How long was he without food ? *Forty days.*
6. What took place ? *He was tempted by Satan.*
7. How did he answer each of Satan's temptations ? *With words of Scripture.*

**NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.**

19. Wherein consists the sinfulness of our fallen estate ?

The sinfulness of our fallen estate consists in the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of our whole nature, commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which flow from it.

**THE LESSON OUTLINE.****The Son of Man.****I. THE HOLY ONE.***Comest thou to me ? vs. 13, 14.*

Holy, harmless, undefiled. Heb. 7. 26.

Who did no sin. 1 Pet. 2. 22.

**II. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.***Becometh us to fulfill, v. 15.*

Yet learned he obedience. Heb. 5. 8.

He humbled himself. Phil. 2. 8.

**III. THE SON OF GOD.***My beloved Son, vs. 16, 17.*

Thou art my Son. Psa. 2. 7.

His dear Son. Col. 1. 13.

**IV. THE LONELY SUFFERER.***An hungered . . . tempter came, vs. 1-3.*

Feeling of our infirmities. Heb. 4. 15.

Perfect through sufferings. Heb. 2. 10.

**V. THE TRUSTING SON.***Live . . . by every word, v. 4.*

Trust in the Lord. Psa. 37. 3.

No thought for your life. Luke 12. 22.

**VI. THE LOYAL SON.***Thou shalt not tempt, vs. 5-7.*

Walk humbly with thy God. Mic. 6. 8.

Humble yourselves. James 4. 10.

**VII. THE SELF-DENYING SON.***All these things, vs. 8-10.*

Gain the whole world. Luke 9. 25.

Forsaketh . . . all. Luke 14. 33.

**VIII. THE VICTORIOUS SON.***The devil leaveth him, v. 11.*

As lightning fall. Luke 10. 18.

I also overcame. Rev. 3. 21.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

For one year John's voice and its wholesome echoes ring through Palestine. From each province, from every village, curious and devout listeners throng; many receive his teachings, and are baptized. From the earthly to the spiritual their minds are turned; from the puerile, formal religion of the scribes to a very practical conception of godliness. They learn that righteousness means doing right, not merely making sacrifices and paying tithes. They are placed, also, in an

attitude of expectancy of the coming of the long-predicted Messiah. While all men mused on these strange conditions a carpenter of Nazareth laid aside his tools and walked down the Jordan valley to Bethabara. His neighbors had esteemed him as a godly youth, but not yet was he known far beyond his village home. He watched the multitudes receiving baptism, till all had gone up from the waters; then he himself came forward. John, prophet, preacher, and baptizer, saw, under the Spirit's influence, that here was a strangely superior Being; one to whom he could impart nothing, but from whom he could learn all things; one who, being holy, needed no repentance, and, possessing God's Spirit, could bestow it in abundance. He shrank from baptizing this Man, whom he now recognized as the Messiah, and "the Lamb of God." But Jesus reassured him with the declaration that it was their duty and God's will. As Jesus arose from the water, praying, the sky parted; a dove descended, and a voice from heaven declared that he who stood there was the Son of God, well pleasing in his Father's sight. Newly baptized and anointed, Jesus stands on the threshold of his work, when an impulse from on high drives him into the wilderness, to meditate on his mission, to commune with his Father, and to wrestle with the world's great adversary. So intense is the concentration of his thought, and so close the communion of his soul, that for forty days he is upborne above the needs of the body, and tastes no food. Then come fierce temptations. But all the proposals of Satan are met by Scripture. The dark shadow of the foiled tempter is lifted from the scene, and angels draw nigh with succor for the victorious Son.

Verse 13. *Then cometh Jesus.* He was now thirty years of age; not yet widely known as a prophet or rabbi, otherwise his townspeople would not have been so astonished a few weeks later at his mighty works and words. *From Galilee.* Where, in the town of Nazareth, he had lived from childhood. *To Jordan.* Probably, to Bethabara, a ford of the Jordan, near Jericho, where John baptized. It is between seventy and eighty miles from Nazareth. *To be baptized.* If sinless, how could Jesus receive a baptism which betokened repentance? He stood as the Representative Man, and, standing with his fellows, sought "to fulfill all righteousness." He accepted our place that he might lead us out of it. And his baptism, as we shall see, with its accompanying manifestations, was used by God as a formal induction into the Messianic office.

14. *But John forbade him.* "The Greek verb denotes a strenuous opposition; it implies the active and earnest preventing with the gesture, or hand, or voice."—*Alford. I have need.* Brought face to face with the purity of Jesus, the seer felt his own sinfulness and need of higher cleansing. *To be baptized of thee.* Whether John had seen Jesus before is not certain. He may have known of him, without knowing him. But now the inner prophetic light revealed to John our Lord's spiritual eminence. The teacher who is most deeply conscious of his own spiritual needs is best qualified for his high and holy office.

15. *Suffer it to be so now.* As if he had said, "True, to bestow the higher baptism is mine; but for the present let it pass." *Thus it cometh us.* Both are embraced in the word "us;" John in his office, and Jesus in his. *To fulfill all righteousness.* Every holy custom, every godly ordinance and institution. Jesus seems to recognize the

incongruity of the act which so startles John, but as the representative of mankind it becomes his duty to receive the rite, and as the baptizer it becomes John's duty to administer it. Baptism was the visible sign of citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, wherein Jesus was to be at once subject, obedient to his Father's will, and King as his Father's representative.

16. *When he was baptized.* We do not consider the form of baptism, whether by dipping, pouring, or sprinkling, to be worthy of the heated discussions that have arisen concerning it. The earliest pictures of it, in the catacombs of Rome, represent Jesus as standing waist-deep in the water, and John pouring water upon his head. *Straightway.* Immediately. *The heavens were opened.* Luke adds, "while praying." So to the believer the heaven is open and the Spirit descends. *He saw.* The vision was seen by Jesus and also by John (John 1. 30-34); probably by them only. *The Spirit of God descending like a dove.* Luke adds, "in bodily shape." Thus, typically, was the Holy Spirit manifested. The Spirit came upon Jesus that through him he might also descend upon us. For all work for God we need the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

17. *A voice from heaven.* Three times during the Saviour's life we read of a voice from heaven; on this, the opening day of his ministry; at the transfiguration on Mount Hermon; and on the last day of his public teaching in the temple. *This is my beloved Son.* Here is the divine attestation to Jesus as the Christ, and as the God-man. This answered all the questions that were whirling in the Baptist's excited mind. *In whom I am well pleased.* The translation is scarcely as strong as the original. "I delight" would be a better expressing of the infinite

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complacency with which the Father regards the Son.

1. *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.* Up from the low valley of the Jordan. Luke says he was "full of the Spirit;" Mark says "the Spirit driveth him." The presence of the Holy Spirit throughout our Lord's human life and ministry is very remarkable. Conceived by the Holy Ghost; baptized, as we have just seen, in the presence of the Holy Spirit; he was led into the wilderness by the same divine force, anointed to preach the Gospel, and enabled to do his mighty works. Through the Holy Spirit he offered up himself to God as a sacrifice for our sins, and by that Spirit he was raised again from the dead. A particular lesson for the modern Christian is that as the Spirit attended him through all the vicissitudes of his life, so he is ready to attend us. *To be tempted of the devil.* Or, as we would say, "by the devil." The devil, as Dr. Pentecost has clearly shown, appears at the opening of every dispensation of God. He wrecked God's fair creation in Eden; he entered Pharaoh and resisted God's purpose to bring his chosen people out of Egypt; he embodied himself in Baal and Ashtoreth, and corrupted the custodians of the divine truth; and now he dare not stand idly by and see the Son of God undertake the redemption of the human race without striving to overthrow him; and even when he is defeated it is only for a season. The word "tempted" is used in Scripture in two senses. "God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man;" that is, he cannot be induced to sin, and he never solicits anyone to sin—Jesus now suffered. But the word is also used for the testing of faith, as when "God did tempt Abraham."

2. *When he had fasted forty days.* By the intensity of his soul's communion he was lifted above the wants of the body. In times of excitement appetite is forgotten. Moses and Elijah had a like experience. Throughout this forty days and forty nights we have every reason to believe our Lord was tempted. *He was afterward ahungered.* There came a natural reaction from his intense spiritual excitement.

3. *The tempter came to him.* In his hour of weakness. How the tempter came we do not know, and we need not guess. Speculation on such points is not profitable. *If thou be the Son of God.* That is, peculiarly and eminently his son. The forty days had probably been filled with Satanic arguments to distrust the divine testimonials given at our Lord's baptism. *Command that these stones be made bread.* Little stones shaped and colored like the loaves of the

country were spread all around. A glance at them would make the fasting Saviour feel additional pangs of hunger; and here is the temptation, "Simply satisfy your hunger." Why would it have been wrong to have done so? It would have been wrong to have followed Satan as a leader; besides, God's Spirit had led to the wilderness experience, including the prolonged fast, and God's Spirit can now be trusted to furnish food.

4. *It is written.* Dr. M. R. Vincent calls attention to the fact that when our Lord addressed men he said, "I say unto you," because, as we may suppose, he was uttering divine truth; but when he addressed Satan, he said, "It is written," because, as a man, he was being tempted. *Man shall not live by bread alone,* etc. (Deut. 8. 3.) There are deeper needs than hunger and higher satisfaction than food. "Thou [Satan] knowest little of what I have endured, and little of my abundant recompense."

5. *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city.* That is, into Jerusalem. *And setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.* On a little wing of the great building. Fanciful explanations have been made of the particular place where our Lord sat on the temple, but all such speculations are idle. Whether he came there physically or in mind merely, is an equally useless question.

6. *If thou be the Son of God.* Again Satan starts with a doubt. *Cast thyself down.* "If you will not exercise your divine power in relieving yourself from the pangs of hunger, perhaps you will be willing to exercise it to dazzle the world by your own majesty, and demonstrate your divine sonship." *It is written.* Satan can quote the Bible as well as Jesus. *He shall give,* etc. (Psa. 91. 11-12.) "If you are the Anointed, claim the promises made to the Messiah. The Messiah is to be guarded by angels, and if you are he, you are so guarded." It was a temptation to presumption; to pride; and to rash confidence.

7. *It is written.* Because some people misuse Scripture, is no reason why we should not rightly use it. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* This does not mean, "Thou [Satan] shalt not tempt me [Jesus];" it means rather, "I [Jesus] am warned by Deut. 6. 16 not rashly and thoughtlessly to tempt God." He who looks for God's protection outside the path of duty tempts God. This phrase seems analogous to taking "the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

8, 9. *An exceeding high mountain.* We know not just the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. This must have been as magnificent a showing in that age as it could even be now. Remote as that time was, the kingdoms





of his body, the Church; or (3) as a consecration of himself to his work, followed by the special consecration from the Father; or (4) as a great act of humility." Perhaps no one of these suggestions covers the full significance of his baptism, and something of truth may be in each of them.

"TEMPTED....YET WITHOUT SIN."

The life of Jesus was not a supernatural phantasm, but a natural human development. It was necessary that he should be tried as we are tried, that he should pass through spiritual crises as all men must pass on their way to greatness in the kingdom of God. This account of Christ's special temptation is the story of one of these crises through which his soul passed at the threshold of his public work. Most men who propose to themselves great aims must have deadly reckoning with the devil before they begin. It is a matter of little importance whether the story of the temptation is the narration of literal occurrences, or inner experiences thrown out into allegorical pictures; enough that it stands for reality. We are to bear in mind that, as this experience came to the Lord while he was withdrawn from men, the account of it must have been given to his disciples by himself. We may be sure, therefore, that the account corresponds to the spiritual reality of the conflict through which he passed and out of which he came forth as victor. It is not necessary that we shall think of Satan appearing to Jesus in some bodily form. That would have destroyed the subtlety and so the power of the temptations. The devil does not come to men in that way, but in his most powerful seductions under almost impenetrable masks. The purer, the nobler, the nature tempted, the more refined and deceptive must be the temptation. To gross and already deeply fallen natures Satan may come with a bald and undisguised proposition to do wrong, presenting the temptation with the insolence sometimes of a command. But upon a holy spirit such a gross assault would have no effect. To such evil must be proposed by subtle and specious suggestion; by the advocacy of right ends to be gained by wrong means, by adroit indirections that give promise of a speedier accomplishment of some good purpose. The whole force of the temptations presented to Jesus lay just there—to take a short course to success instead of traveling by the slow, hard road of patient endurance and suffering. So some three years later Satan renewed this temptation, using Peter as his agent; but Jesus instantly recognized the voice which he had heard in the wilderness, and replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16. 23).

### Thoughts for Young People.

1. *The purity and spiritual power of Jesus were manifested to all.* There is a wickedness so complete and thorough that it is manifested to everybody who looks on the sinner. Slinking through the low parts of our great metropolitan cities are men whose gestures, glances, and tones alike reveal that they are Satan's. Even in a church their badness would show itself out to all observers. The opposite of this is also true. There is a goodness which cannot be concealed. Such goodness Jesus had. John had merely to glance at him and his confession burst forth, "I have need to be baptized of thee."

2. *The purity and spiritual power were at once tested by God and by Satan.*—By God, because such a test is necessary. The struggle gave our Lord a clearer view of what was before him, and the victory gave him great encouragement. By Satan, because he hates God and hates his creatures, and sought to overthrow him through whom the salvation of the race was planned.

3. *The purity and spiritual power of Jesus were manifested in his human life.* It was not as God he was tempted. It was his human passions and ambitions that were solicited to sinful indulgences. All this makes him able to help us.

"Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For he has felt the same."

### By Way of Illustration.

*The baptism of Jesus.* Peter said, "God hath anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." We must believe that the descent of the Holy Spirit at the waters of Jordan endowed him with special ministerial qualifications. He declared in his first sermon: "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." We read in Exodus that every priest must be anointed with the sacred oil, and our High Priest must not be without so sacred a designation to his office, and thus the blessed Spirit descended and abode on him.

*The first temptation* was to the senses. But so far from coming in any coarse, sensuous form, it came shrouded in a thousand subtle veils. When Israel hungered in the wilderness God fed them with manna. An angel had touched the famishing Elijah and shown him food. Why did not the Son of God provide himself a table in the wilderness? The answer is that we are not to be guided by our lower wants. He who thinks



that we live by bread alone will make the securing of bread the chief object in life, and will determine to have it at any cost.

Israel spent not forty days, but forty years, in a waste wilderness where was no means of human subsistence, not starving, but divinely provided for to prove to every age that human support depends not on bread, but on God's unfailling word of promise.

*The second temptation.* An old Puritan divine wrote: "Faith is confidence in God. Presumption is confidence without warrant." To peril one's life to rescue a fellow-being is faith. To unnecessarily expose oneself to danger is presumption. Grace Darling, pushing out with her father from Longstone lighthouse to rescue the nine men huddled on a rock in momentary expectation of death, is an example of heroic faith. Captain Boynton, plunging into the whirlpool at Niagara to secure fame and money, is an example of presumption. One trusted God, the other tempted him. One lived, the other died.

We are presumptuous when we expect God to help us teach if we have made no preparation, and when we are careless of our health and expect him to keep us well.—*Schauffer.*

*The third temptation.* This was a temptation to secure high ends by unworthy means. It would turn the hands of God's clock around and hasten the striking of the hour longed for. It is a temptation which comes to us as we move along the path of obscure and apparently unrewarding service for remote spiritual ends. It comes to most ardent minds in moments of unbelief. It was this temptation which came to the early Church, and it accepted with pride and joy the earthly splendor of Constantine's authority, and dreamed that it was soon to conquer the world for Christ. It awoke to find that it had been overcome by the world.—*E. N. Puckard.*

*The sword of the Spirit.* The devil's temptation should always be met with, "It is written." As well might a soldier expect to go unarmed into battle and be victorious as a Christian to overcome evil without his Bible in his heart and on his lips. Christ vanquished the devil with the word of God.

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

There is great comfort in the thought that in all things Jesus identifies himself with us. He is our brother as a child, our brother in the family, our brother in toil, our brother in temptation. We pass through no experience through which he did not pass. We can tell no tale of sorrow or trial unfamiliar to him. It is a comfort to open our hearts to one who understands. We turn with a desolate heart from one who cannot

sympathize, because he has never known a sorrow like our own.

"One there is above all others  
Well deserves the name of friend,"

for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succor them that are tempted. It was the human Jesus who went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, "like as we are." The temptations came through suggestions made to his mind, just as they come to us. He may have seen no visible form, as we do not, and yet we are often conscious of an evil presence seeking to draw us away from what we know is right. Let us not be deceived. Satan is not an imaginary being. He is as real as yourself, and talks to you, either directly or through his agents, as he talked to Jesus in the desert. It is wise to recognize the foe, so that he may not take advantage of our ignorance or indifference. He would be pleased to have us believe he does not exist until he gets us where we find it out by his resistless power over us. Yes, I believe he exists; but I also triumphantly believe that he is a vanquished foe and can do me no harm, since Jesus lived and died for me.

If life seems a wilderness of trial and your faith is ready to give way, come with our brother Jesus, our Saviour Jesus, into this wilderness, and learn of him. It was not the strong divinity that the adversary attacked; it was the weak humanity. Where it would pierce most keenly the dart was thrust; when he was exhausted by hunger Satan said, "Command these stones that they be made bread; you can, for you have miraculous power as the Son of God." He could have worked the miracle, but it would not have been in accord with his Father's will. In all things he must be like us, and so he must wait God's time and take God's way of relief from physical suffering. He must perfectly and patiently trust God. The kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were offered him for the price of serving Satan, just as wealth and sinful enjoyments are offered us for the same price, which seems so easy to pay. But beyond this suffering life and the death of the cross Jesus saw that day when all these kingdoms and the glory of them would be his by rightful inheritance and the tempter under his feet in chains of darkness forever. The temptation had no power in the light of future victory. As we are, he was tempted; as he conquered, so shall we conquer. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." From the pinnacle of the temple he was challenged to throw himself down, for how could any harm come to one so true to God? So he tempts us to presume upon the divine goodness and care, even though we go

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contrary to the law, the will, and the providence of God. Distrust, selfishness, irreverent presumption, these cover all forms of temptation that Satan knows how to present. All have the same object; the separation of the human from the divine will, the breaking of that harmony which is the peace of heaven. We go through no deeper depths than Jesus knew. How did he conquer? By the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; he drew again and again "a sharp blade from the quiver of that old book, Deuteronomy," the same from which we may draw, and slew the tempter with the sword of the word used by the Spirit of God with which he was filled. He suffered and conquered that we might learn the secret of complete and constant victory. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

### The Teachers' Meeting.

I. *The baptism.* Call attention to the time, the place, and facts of this event, and note four aspects of Jesus: 1. He was a holy man, and everyone who came in contact with him felt that. 2. He was a humble man, who took upon him the duties and obligations of a sinful humanity. 3. He was endowed with the Spirit. The divine life in him had grown with his growth: but now in the hour of his baptism the fullness of his Spirit comes. 4. He was the Son of the Most High God.

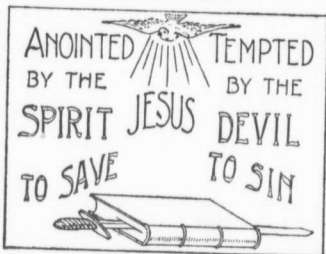
II. *The temptation.*—Jesus went into the wilderness because he must be alone to meditate upon his mission. He fasted because in the depth and strain of his feelings there was no desire for food. He was tempted just as we are, and he was victorious just as we may be. 1. He was victorious over self. 2. He was victorious over pride. 3. He was victorious over the world. He chose to establish a kingdom not by conquering his way to it, like Alexander and Napoleon, but by dying for men.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Holy Spirit, faithful guide,  
Almighty Spirit, we confess.  
How firm a foundation.  
Precious promise.  
I need thee every hour.  
Yield not to temptation.

Come, Holy Spirit, come,  
When in the press he'll hide me.  
Whenever trials tempt my soul.  
Be with me every moment.  
Lead me, O effulgent Light.

### Blackboard.



What a scene that was when Jesus, after the holy anointing of the Spirit, was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil! He upon whom the Spirit rested that he might save the world was tempted in all points of human frailty, yet without sin. The prince of this world came, and had nothing in him; all his wily assaults were futile against the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, by which Jesus prevailed. Baptized by the Spirit and armed with his quick and powerful weapon—"It is written"—we too may repel the tempter without argument or compromise.

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### Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.

—The first appearance, even of the Great Deliverer, may seem like that of a great destroyer, but he will at length make himself known as he is, and allay the fears of his people.—*Daries*.

—God is not against man. He is a God of infinite love, compassion, and mercy. He is more willing to save than we are to be saved.—*Mitchell*.

—It is not enough Christ is born; but to take benefit by his birth we are to find him. Such a one, then, is born. What shall we be the better if we find him not? As good as not born as not known; to us all one.—*Andrews*.

—This is the true liberty of Christ, when a free man finds himself in love to duty. Not in shrinking from our distasteful occupations, but in fulfilling them, do we realize our high origin.—*Roberts*.

—It is not so important that man should be pleased with us as that God should; but man's favor is more likely to be won in seeking God's favor than in any other way.—*Trumbull*.

—The law threatened, not helped; commanded, not healed; showed, not took away, our feebleness; but it made ready for the physician, who was to come with grace and truth.—*Augustine*.

—The law was not Moses's gift, but God's gift through Moses; the Gospel, with its grace and truth, is Christ's own, and this came with him to men.—*Curry*.

—But what is this strength of Christ that comes to us? It is his character, his strength, his purity, his truth, his mercifulness—in one word, his holiness, the perfectness of his moral life. That is the inner strength.—*Phillips Brooks*.

—Those whose hearts are not pierced with the sword of God's word shall certainly be cut down and destroyed by the ax of his judgments.—*Burkitt*.

—As soon as the sinner opens his heart to God in repentance God opens the heavens and owns him as his child.—*Gossner*.

—God ever sends food from heaven to his down-hearted servants if they will only take it; and therefore, if they continue faint and low, it is their own fault for not seeing and using the provision laid beside them, the table spread in the wilderness.—*McLaren*.

—The earth is our workhouse, but heaven is our storehouse. This is a place to run in, and that is a place to rest in.—*Secker*.

—Life's uncertainties give us a new hold upon the everlasting.—*Pearse*.

—As ships meet at sea for a moment together, when words of greeting must be spoken, and then away upon the deep, so men meet in this world; and I think we should cross no man's path without hailing him, and, if he needs, giving him supplies.—*Becher*.

### Here and There.

... During the last eight years there have been given in Great Britain \$31,000,000 in bequests for charitable, religious, or educational purposes. These bequests have come from four hundred and sixty-six men and women, whose aggregate estates amounted to \$380,000,000.

... There is at least one Methodist preacher who is a deaf-mute. Every Sunday afternoon in the First Church in Chicago he preaches to a congregation of deaf-mutes. His name is Phillip J. Hasenstab, of the Rock River Conference.

... Amid all the honors conferred upon Admiral Dewey a Sunday school in a Western city elected him an honorary member. What an "honorary member" of a Sunday school is we have no means of knowing.

... In the republic of Mexico there are said to be one hundred and ten languages and dialects spoken. To assist persons from different parts of the republic to understand each other there is a recognized method of manual signs which, according to some travelers, answers the purpose very well.

... A magistrate of Brooklyn, N. Y., makes the statement that in eight months 13,800 persons were brought into the second division of the magistrate courts of Greater New York for being drunk, and 5,731 for disorderly conduct. Nearly all of the latter were drunk, as well as disorderly. He estimates that nearly ninety per cent of the arrests of Greater New York are the result of the indulgence in intoxicating liquors.

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# PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

## A New Year's Prayer.

BY K. E. P. WINNIPEG.

Thou art the Lord, the Living God,  
The Rock of my Salvation;  
To Thee I lift my longing eyes,  
And pour my supplication;  
Let me but know that Thou art near  
And strong in strength sufficient, I face the  
coming year.

Thou art the Lord, my King and God,  
Speak, and Thy servant heareth,  
Order my footsteps, guide my paths,  
Then bright my way appeareth;  
What thou will have me do, make clear,  
And with obedient, child-like trust, I face the  
coming year.

Thou art the Lord, my Father, God,  
Thy goodness changeth never,  
In paths of truth and virtue lead,  
Nor leave Thy servant ever;  
Chide me if wilful, for I fear,  
Nought but myself, my sinful self, in all the  
coming year.

## Three Useful Books.

We have noticed that of all Sunday school workers the primary teachers are the most eager to obtain new material and to learn new methods of teaching. We therefore call attention to three books which have recently come to our notice, and will be of service to teachers of little people, whether at home, in the Sunday school, or in the Junior League.

One is *The Shepherd Psalm*, by Josephine Baldwin; a little book of talks to children on the twenty-third psalm. Almost every child in the Sunday school is familiar with this psalm, and will therefore be interested in the pretty little stories and thoughts upon it by a skilled and sensible primary teacher, who knows better than most just what is suitable for childhood. A little pamphlet of hints and instructions concerning the teaching of these talks is bound into the volume, and will be found helpful. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. Toronto: William Briggs. 70 pages. Price, 35 cents.)

A second book is *Bible Stories without Names*, by the Rev. Harry Smith, M.A. This is an ingenious arrangement of stories from the Bible, in which

everything is told in a picturesque manner, except the names of the persons and places. These are to be guessed or found out by the children. A series of questions is given with each story; and to aid the teacher, a key to the Scripture texts referred to. This book may be very helpful for Sunday afternoons with the children. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. Toronto: William Briggs. 183 pages. Price, 75 cents.)

The third book is *The Children's Prayer: Addresses to the Young on the Lord's Prayer*, by Rev. James Wells, D.D. This differs from the two other books in being a series of short sermons in simple language upon the different petitions in the Lord's Prayer. The analysis of the prayer in the first address is ingenious; and the general treatment of the subjects is excellent. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. Toronto: William Briggs. 189 pages. Price, 75 cents.)

J. L. HURLBUT.

## Primary Resources.

BY JULIA E. PECK.

It is a great privilege for the primary teacher to spend her time and strength for her class. Shall we keep this privilege all to ourselves? In trying to shoulder all the primary burdens and assume all the primary responsibilities, are we shutting out other helpers who would love to work for the primary cause if they knew our need? When we went to that last convention were we sure that the reason we needed fresh supplies was because we had exhausted those resources nearest at hand, and used up everything within reach?

Let us see what resources we have lying idle in our midst. Here is a young girl who was saying only yesterday that she wished she could be of some use in church work. She must spend her days in her wheeled chair. She amuses herself with her drawing, painting, and copying verses in her scrapbook. We need to have several songs written, verses copied, and we want new designs for Easter decoration. The young girl in her wheeled chair would be delighted to be of use. She can suggest a number of designs for decoration, for illumined water color cards, and will gladly assume the burden of primary designing, drawing, scroll-work, etc. Thus we have hours of time gained which we can spend in Bible study.

Review possibilities in this way: Go to church

early some Sunday. Take a back seat and watch people as they come in, asking yourself as each appears, "Of what use can you be in our primary department?"

Here comes a professional teacher of harmony, who composes songs for publication. What about that song for Children's Day for which we have words, but need new music? Here comes a lady who has real talent in writing dainty verses for dinner parties, who writes birthday poems, steamer letters, and what not, in a charming style, which she undervalues in her modesty. What could she do if persuaded that her help would be greatly needed in writing birthday verses, offering songs, prayer songs, for our primary department?

Here is an overgrown boy who considers himself too big for Sunday school. Let us work him into the primary department in the capacity of janitor, librarian, or any office which will make him feel that he is in charge and at the head of things in that particular department.

Here is a lonely man who consoles himself in his many lonely hours by cultivating a beautiful garden. Would he not dedicate a section of his garden to the primary class, and trim us with flowers on all our special occasions?

Here comes a secular kindergartner. We can persuade her to give an occasional "talk" to our primary assistants on scientific methods of primary teaching, and to furnish us lists of books on child-study.

Here comes a lawyer. Of what possible use is he in the primary department? Let me tell you of one (too modest to let me mention his name) who has undertaken the task of defending the primary lessons from interruptions. He guards the doors, allowing no one to pass through the room, which would otherwise be a tramway. When impatient people urge that the shortest way out is the way through the primary room he uses certain forceful arguments which compel them to go around. Such is his enthusiasm for the cause that he says, laughingly, he will use his fists if his arguments fail.

Plenty of people are idle, as far as the primary department is concerned, who would gladly take hold if persuaded that their help was needed, and who will love to do, and do easily and with fresh enthusiasm, that which goes hard with an over-worked teacher. This plan gives the teacher greater freedom to develop new ideas, original ways of working, and more time for study.

Let us not fail to attend the next convention; but let us bring to it all the new ideas gleaned from these previously overlooked neighbors of ours, and all we have gleaned from our wider opportunities to experiment and to study.

## Reward Cards.

BY MRS. O. S. CHAPMAN.

PRIMARY TEACHERS are frequently troubled at the lack of knowledge of the lesson on the part of the little ones, thereby necessitating the spending of much of the allotted time for teaching upon matters that should have been prepared under the instruction of the mother at home, leaving only a few moments to hurriedly impress vital truths and make personal applications.

There are many homes in almost every locality where it would be simply an impossibility to interest the parents at once, but in the majority of the homes of our children suggestions kindly made by the teacher are acted upon very promptly. What, then, is the solution of the problem of unlearned lessons in the school? In the first place get the home and the Sunday school to work together intelligently and intentionally. How can this be accomplished?

1. Make personal calls upon the parents of every child in your class.

2. Frankly state to the mother your desire to cooperate with her in an earnest purpose to teach the child to discern what is of most value for both time and eternity.

3. Assume that she already appreciates the importance of home preparation of the weekly lessons, and then explain your method of using reward cards as an incentive with the little ones to this end. She will quickly see the need of her help in the matter if she is an average mother.

After this intercourse in the homes have a little talk with your class. Tell them that you have made some very pretty cards in a variety of shapes (showing them as you proceed), and every little girl or boy who comes to Sunday school with a well-prepared lesson will have one of these hearts, or crosses, or trumpets, or shields, etc., pinned through a bright ribbon to coat or dress. Then, to make a general point of contact, as it were, state your requirements regarding "lessons learned," or "well prepared," the Golden Text, the Central Truth, and the answers to the few questions given them the previous week.

At first there will be, perhaps, but one or two who will grasp the idea and appreciate its significance; but do not get discouraged; keep on in the good way, and at the end of the quarter you will be obliged to invest in more cardboard for your rewards.

Why the increase of interest in the lessons? Why the absence of restlessness among the little ones as the time of closing draws near? The

answer is in partnership coupled with you to the truths of eternal application instances a things not of the heart of

Here are cards: Out various ar hearts, stars a narrow r "Lesson Re close of the perfectly rec the date writ add to the ze to those not pressed belie card next Su words.—From

"In

A LITTLE B Sunday schoo be Premier of a big man." turning to the possibilities w Likewise are t every boy.

In the spring seed, carefully just the right t did he labor s was because of future, an abun ply a seed the quence, but t fields ready for within itself w

So it is with c the Bible schoo school—the pri into the prim comes as before

Many are the partment, but when we consid possibilities," w "Christianity possibilities. T

answer is manifest. The home has entered into partnership with the school, and mother-pride, coupled with mother-love, has made it possible for you to find many precious moments to bring within the comprehension of your class the vital truths of each lesson, and to make plain the spiritual applications; yea, more, you have in some instances awakened vital interest upon vital things not only in the heart of your pupil, but in the heart of the mother and father as well.

Here are some suggestions for making reward cards: Out of cardboard of different tints cut various articles—crosses, shields, trumpets, hearts, stars, etc. Through an eyelet in each tie a narrow red, white, and blue ribbon. Write "Lesson Reward" upon each card. At the close of the lesson pin upon each child who has perfectly recited a card, with his or her name and the date written upon it. Suitable remarks will add to the zest when pinning it on. Say nothing to those not receiving cards, unless it be an expressed belief that Mamie or Jack will have a card next Sunday, or some such encouraging words.—*From the Westminster Teacher.*

### "Infinite Possibilities."

BY LUCY G. STOCK.

A LITTLE five-year-old one day astonished his Sunday school teacher by saying, "I'm going to be Premier of the Dominion some day, when I'm a big man." His pastor heard the remark, and turning to the teacher, said, "There are infinite possibilities within that boy; train him well." Likewise are there "infinite possibilities" within every boy.

In the spring of the year the farmer sowed his seed, carefully dropping it in the best way, at just the right time, and in the right place. Why did he labor so thoughtfully and carefully? It was because of the possibility of reaping, in the future, an abundant harvest. The seed was simply a seed then, a tiny thing of little consequence, but to-day, as we look out over the fields ready for the reaper's sickle, we realize that within itself were the waving harvests.

So it is with one branch of our church work—the Bible school—and in one department of the school—the primary. Why is such effort put into the primary department? Our answer comes as before—because of its possibilities.

Many are the possibilities of the primary department, but we realize the greatest of all when we consider the possibilities, the "infinite possibilities," within each child.

"Christianity honors the child because of its possibilities. The child is life in the bud, life

unfolding, life developing." The child is man in germ. A child seems of little consequence when singled out from among many hundreds to make of him an individual study, but who can estimate the possibilities wrapped up in that tiny life?

The child is the most valuable thing in all this world, because of its possibilities. "Only a child!" One might as well say, "Only a little blue egg;" but within that frail shell sleeps the robin. "Only a trickling stream;" but other trickling streams will flow into this one, and with tremendous force, turning wheels and spindles, it will rush on to the sea.

It might have been said of John the Baptist, "Only a child," but that child presently, as herald of the King of kings, would stir a nation, calling it to repentance and righteousness. It might have been said of Abraham Lincoln, "Only a child," but that child soon, by a master stroke, would break the chains of slavery and set a down-trodden race free. "Only a child," but the child is the man of the future.

It is a solemn thought that within the child are not only the germs of good, but also the possibilities of evil. Surely we may do much toward developing the one and repressing the other. Environment must be taken into consideration; heredity as well; but, after all, training becomes the great determining influence. The tremendous responsibility resting upon parents and teachers cannot be expressed in words. Here is plastic material, and the impress placed upon it now will remain through life. Ages ago the birds, picking up their food by the river bank, left their tracks in the soft mud. To-day we see those tracks in the solid rock. So it is with the child. The impressions made now will remain as clearly and as permanently defined as the tracks in the rock; for, as some one has said, "The child's mind is wax to receive, but marble to retain."

Next to the mother, to the primary teacher is given the greatest privilege on earth, that of taking life at its beginning and starting these little souls in the right path, that path which leads at last through the gates of the eternal city. To her is given the privilege and the possibility of influencing and training future leaders, future presidents, future ministers, future Christians.

May God give us wisdom, that in leading his little ones we may always guide them in the right way, and cause none to stumble, for, "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea."

## Train the Children to Give.

HARK! How the wind moans! Ugh! How the cold cuts!

The Sunday school room, warm, cosy, sunny, is such a welcome retreat! Did you notice that shivering man at the corner near the church? Did you see that placard proclaiming an infectious sickness in the freezing shadows of Poverty Alley? This is a season abundant in its opportunities for making others happy—the poor, the hungry, the scantily clad, the indigent sick. We want such training for our children that they will think of these people, and not selfishly live for themselves. One of the grandest things we can accomplish is to educate people to live unselfishly. Let us labor with the beginning of the people—little children. If a teacher, through the Sunday school class, should make a systematic, patient effort to reach the poverty about it, and keep a record of it, what a beautiful chapter could be filled up by the season's close, and of what interest it would be as a story to be read. Fill up such a record. Make one chapter. One? The additional stimulus to effort in such training is that it is not just one chapter that will be filled, but the child-nature is developed into unselfish activity in after life. The field of effort widens in every possible direction, and your boy man-grown, your girl woman-grown, will go out to cultivate the wide field patiently, lovingly, and in the Spirit of Jesus.

A LITTLE ten-year-old boy came to his mother the other day saying, "Mamma, I have decided to be a Christian." The mother's heart leaped with sudden joy as she made answer, "I am very glad to hear it, dear, but I have thought for some time that you loved Jesus and were trying to please him." "Yes," he replied, "but some way I feel a little different now, and I wanted to come right and tell you." At the bedtime hour, in the good-night prayer with the little one, the mother thanked God for the answer to her prayers, and for her little Christian boy. The little fellow is healthy, happy and jolly, fond of books, full of play and fun, and there is no fear of his becoming morbid, because the love of Christ has entered his heart and life.

The pastor and Sunday school teacher, however faithful, feel their work incomplete unless supplemented by loving, helpful instruction in the home. At his mother's knee the child should be taught his first lessons of love and obedience to the heavenly Father, his duties to others, and the associations of the divine element in the everyday duties of life.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## FIRST QUARTER.

## LESSON I. (January 7.)

## THE BIRTH OF JESUS. Luke 2. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1. 21.

## Primary Notes.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.



*Introductory.* How beautiful new things are to us, when they are all fresh and not spoiled. [A short talk about new things.] Here we are with a new year before us, and a new set of lessons for the days to come. Our Father gives us blessings that are "new every morning," and to-day he has a new one for us if we will use it. But we love the old things, too, that we have been used to always. We would not give them up. We do not want new parents, brothers and sisters, or friends to take the place of those we have always known and loved. We long to keep the old, now grown so dear. So, though we have a new set of lessons, we have still the dear old story of Jesus and his love. We will learn this little opening hymn verse. Some of you know it now.

(Air, "I think, when I read," Gospel Hymns.)

The lessons are all about Jesus our Lord,

The Saviour who came from above;

Of his wonderful birth, and his life on the earth,

And his goodness and mercy and love.

To help us remember the lessons we will make a wall-roll of them, a page for a Sunday. [The teacher can make this of manila paper of convenient size, fastening the sheets, lettered at home, with small rings, and running through them a bone knitting needle or smooth round stick, allowing them to be turned easily for constant review.]

On this first sheet see the letters of the title of the lesson and the first words of the Golden Text. Here in the middle is what we are to learn about especially, "The Wonderful Name." [Drill carefully upon the three things upon the sheet.]

*The wonderful child.* Who was it that had the wonderful name? There have been thousands of dear babies in the world, but never one like this, whose name was given before He came.

[Tell the story of the child as possible, making the children's knowledge of the journey of Jesus to pay a certain sum of the crowded inn of the tired travelers, and the place, where the ox who came from heaven little child to grow

*The good news.* The coming had to be to keep. God let only time they had ple tell it now. So sheep through the they had to do, hear the bright light in the but were soon told wonderful song the of great joy! As so was born and where denly ever and ever to bring the praise of to bring peace on e Do you suppose any or felt sorry to be s surely, we who have Jesus and sing his do it.

*The wonderful name.* This. Why was this Golden Text.] What for the person. He speak the name you it. Some names have name has. There is in heaven. It mean saved from sin. Je makes the wonderf does save us. Shall



When they heard that the good news, they said,



[Tell the story of the Babe of Bethlehem as vividly as possible, making the "point of contact" the children's knowledge of little babies. Tell of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem to pay a certain sum of money, as commanded; of the crowded inns, the stable that received the tired travelers, and of the coming into that lowly place, where the oxen ate, of the little Lord Jesus, who came from heaven to save us, and became a little child to grow up and do his work here.]

*The good news.* The wonderful news of Jesus's coming had to be told at once. It was too good to keep. God let the angels tell it. This was the only time they had the chance. He lets his people tell it now. Some shepherds watching their sheep through the night, just doing the work they had to do, heard the angels' song and saw the bright light in the sky. They were frightened, but were soon told not to be afraid. Then, O the wonderful song they heard after the good tidings of great joy! As soon as it was told that Jesus was born and where he would be found, then suddenly ever and ever so many bright angels came to sing the praise of God, who gave his Son to us to bring peace on earth and good will to men. Do you suppose any of the angels refused to sing or felt sorry to be sent to join the song? Then, surely, we who have the chance now to tell about Jesus and sing his praise ought to be glad to do it.

*The wonderful name.* We must now go back to this. Why was this baby called Jesus? [Repeat Golden Text.] What is a name for? It stands for the person. He is called by it. When you speak the name you think of the one who bears it. Some names have a beautiful meaning. This name has. There is no other name like it, here or in heaven. It means Saviour. We need to be saved from sin. Jesus can do it and will. He makes the wonderful name come true, for he does save us. Shall we do as the shepherds did?



When they heard that Jesus had come, a wonderful Saviour, they said, "Let us go now and find

him." They hurried away to Bethlehem to find Jesus. Did anyone ever try to find him and not do it? O never, never! They found the child Jesus, just as the angels had said, and in the very place. Then they told it everywhere. It was such good news that they had to do as the angels did—tell it out.

Jesus calls you by your names. He knows them every one. Do you speak to him by his dear name? Do you love it? Do you ever speak it carelessly, as if it meant very little? Never do that. It is too wonderful!

### Kindergarten Hints.

BY JULIA E. PECK.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful." Isa. 9. 6.

#### HINTS ON METHOD.

Let us make this a memory lesson, and a good deal more than a memory lesson. We make careful preparation to present the lesson in story shape, yet in such shape that the children memorize it without conscious effort, just from hearing it repeated frequently during the quarter. Anything worth their memorizing must be made simple, direct, complete.

Let us use, as far as possible, direct quotations from the Bible. In preparation the teacher writes and arranges the items so carefully that with frequent reviewing the children are able to give the incidents of the story in their order. As a foundation for our year's course we want the children to be interested in and to love this story for its own sake.

As a supplemental lesson we talk of a time long ago when only part of the Bible was written, and we refer now, and will have frequent occasion to refer later, to the promise as given in the unfinished Bible. Let the children hear something of that time long ago in that far country where men studied their unfinished Bible, hoping and praying for a Saviour.

To-day we use our Golden Text in this connection, and also explain Isa. 9. 2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light—the light of love, the light of God's promise of a Saviour.

#### BIRTH OF JESUS.

Shepherds were in their fields watching their flocks by night. An angel of the Lord stood by them. A light shone around them, and they were afraid. The angel said to the shepherds, "Be not afraid, I bring you good news of great joy, for there is born to you, and to all people this day, in the city of Bethlehem, a Saviour. Ye shall find the babe lying in a manger." And



suddenly, like a bright cloud above them, there was with the angel a host of angels praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." When the angels soared away into the heavens the shepherds said, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see the Babe." They came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger.

Joseph and Mary had come from Galilee to the city of Bethlehem, and found lodging in a stable, because there was no room for them in the crowded inn. The mother wrapped up the Babe and laid him in a manger. When the shepherds saw the baby Jesus lying in his manger-cradle they told of the message and song of the angels. The shepherds went back to their flocks, praising God that the Christ had come.

The mother watching over the holy Babe, hid all these things in her heart.

#### STAR IN THE EAST.

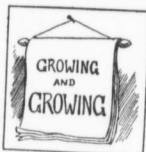
Now, when Jesus was born, in the time of Herod the king, wise men from the east came to Herod, saying, "Where is he that is born King? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." Herod was troubled, and called together certain men who had studied the unfinished Bible, and asked them where the Christ should be born. They answered, "In Bethlehem, for so the promise is written." Herod secretly called the wise men, and learned of them carefully what time the star was seen. He sent them to search for the young child, and said, "When ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may worship him." Having heard the king, the wise men went their way; and the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced. They came into the stable and saw the young child with his mother, and they worshiped him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold, spices, and rare perfumes. God warned the wise men that they must not go back to Herod, and they went home by another way to their own country. God warned Joseph that Herod would seek to hurt the child. Joseph took the Babe and his mother by night and went into Egypt.

#### LESSON II. (January 14.)

#### THE CHILD JESUS VISITS JERUSALEM. Luke 2. 41-52.

GOLDEN TEXT: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2. 52.

#### Primary Notes.



*Introductory.* Draw upon the board or show pictures of bud and blossom of the apple, also the fruit, and a blade of wheat, and the full-eared stalk.

It is winter now, but, hidden safe under the snow's white blanket, or curled up snug and warm and packed away in the branches of the tree, are the blossoms that will wake in the spring. Where the wheat is to grow lie the tiny grains, in the dark below the ground. By and by the sunbeams will whisper to them, and the raindrops will give them a drink; and on the trees and in the ground the blossoms and the green little blades will uncurl in the light. Are they not beautiful? We love to look at them, and say they are perfect. So they are, as far as they go. But would an apple tree full of lovely pink blossoms all year long be the best sort of an apple tree? Would a field of green blades give us flour for our bread? What does the bud on the apple tree do? It grows and grows into a full flower, and then the pink and white fall off and there is a wee apple. What does that do? It grows and grows, and by and by it is ripe and ready to eat. That was what the blossom was for. And in the field the blade becomes the stalk of wheat; and the ear of wheat, with its many little grains, grows full and yellow, and at last is ready to be ground into flour. If blossom and grain stayed exactly the same and never grew, would they make food for us, as God intended they should?

Think of the dear little babies. How sweet and perfect they seem, but every day they grow, and we love to see them getting bigger and stronger, learning something every day. Now we have been talking about growing, and on our banner see written, "Growing and Growing." This is all because Jesus kept on growing and growing, as any child would, only he was different from any child that ever lived, because he never did wrong. Let us think about

*The Child Jesus at home.* Luke, who wrote this story, as the Holy Spirit told him to, tells us that Jesus lived in the home at Nazareth (see map), and grew larger and stronger hearted day by day. The blossom becomes the apple, and the blade the full stalk of wheat, but the baby grows into a boy and then into a man, and Luke tells us that Jesus not only grew larger and stronger, but he kept growing in favor with God and man—that is, he was more and more pleasing to God

and to every one him with favor.

In the carpenter's shop his father Joseph did things for the people he did well. Did he do left part of his work? Mary, his mother, and when she saw he went about his happy face. O growing and growing, pleasing our Father.

But now, when we went on a visit, have

*Jesus in the temple.* When he went to go, for his house.

[Describe the lesson. It, the Child Jesus, pleasure in the presence and told others away. Picture the scholars, the anxious finding of the Father's house.]

Jesus thought was made for, was heavenly Father too.

When Mary went cheerfully, as in the carpenter's shop before, growing, d wiser and wiser, man.

We are growing. We can't be young are older. But an



ter? O let us grow in God's house.

[Drill on title, text.

and to everyone about him. They looked on him with favor—that is, with love and pleasure.

In the carpenter shop at Nazareth Jesus helped his father Joseph, and I am sure he could do many things for the busy carpenter. Whatever he did he did well. Do you suppose he ever grumbled or left part of his work undone? Never. When Mary, his mother, called him he came quickly, and when she wanted him to do anything for her he went about it without waiting, and with a happy face. O to be like Jesus in the home, growing and growing day by day, and always pleasing our Father, God, and those about us.

But now, when Jesus was twelve years old, he went on a visit, as the lesson tells us, and we have

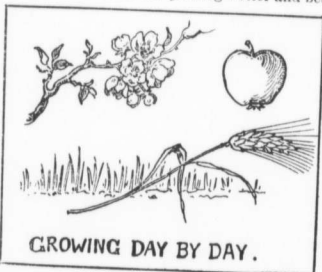
*Jesus in the temple.* How glad he must have been to go, for it was his heavenly Father's holy house.

[Describe the long journey, and the manner of it, the Child Jesus's behavior in the temple, his pleasure in the place where he learned so much, and told others so much that he was sorry to go away. Picture the departing procession of travelers, the anxious return and search, and the finding of the Boy who so loved his Father's house.]

Jesus thought that his business, the thing he was made for, was to find out and to do what his heavenly Father wished. That is our business too.

When Mary wanted her son to go home he went cheerfully, and in the Nazareth home and in the carpenter shop he obeyed his parents as before, growing, day by day, taller and older, but wiser and wiser, and in favor with God and man.

We are growing day by day. We can't help it. We can't be younger to-day than yesterday. We are older. But are we growing better and bet-



GROWING DAY BY DAY.

ter? O let us grow as Jesus did, at home and in God's house.

[Drill on title, text, and words on wall-roll. Ex-

plain clearly the words of the text, and emphasize the thought of growing day by day.]

### Kindergarten Hints.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psa. 40. 8.

#### HINTS ON METHOD.

We plan a course for the year which will give the children a comprehensive but brief and simple account of the life of Christ. We are to get it in such shape that the children can memorize it largely. We study the end from the beginning, that the course may be a complete whole, each lesson growing out of the one preceding it; the process a gradual unfolding.

A helpful book in studying the life of Christ from the child's point of view is *A Life of Christ for the Young*, by George L. Weed, published by George W. Jacobs & Co., Philadelphia. (60 cents.) For the teacher's study, to get the main features of the life of Christ in briefest possible shape, read Stalker's *Life of Christ*, published by American Tract Society, New York. The teacher will find exceedingly useful as supplemental lessons or as opening exercises the chapters on "God the Son on Earth," in a little book by George L. Weed, called *Great Truths Simply Told*. (Philadelphia: George L. Harris & Sons.) Adaptable to the kindergarten grade, and suggestive of a unique method of teaching, is a little book by William E. McLennan, called *In His Footsteps*. All these can be ordered from William Briggs, Toronto.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

The lesson story opens where all danger is over, and the Child is brought safely to his home. The children learn to call the land where Jesus lived the "Holy Land." We describe the beauties of the fields and hills of Nazareth, the tropical fruits, and the brilliant flowers. While children are interested in pictures of people or animals, they are indifferent to pictures and descriptions of scenery unless told what boys and girls could do or could find amid the scenes described. Our description, with the aid of pictures of Nazareth, can be given in this way: When Jesus was a boy he could go with other children to gather wild tulips and poppies in the fields, or to climb hills where they could see snow-capped mountains, higher than they could hope to climb, towering above them. We show a picture of a house which is "like the home where Jesus lived." We describe the manner of living in that tropical country where huts were "used as rooms." Jesus and his little companions went to school in what we would call a chapel. "Synagogue," they called it. Scripture lessons were learned from the lips of the teacher,

for there were no schoolbooks. Jesus was taught at home to pray, and no doubt his mother helped him with his Scripture lessons. When Jesus was old enough to read the Scriptures his parents went on a three days' journey to God's holy house in a distant city, and they took the child with them.

[After describing the Eastern mode of travel tell that the child Jesus could take his turn with the other children of the caravan in riding or walking, or in helping when the tents were pitched; but it probably took strong men or women to fill the heavy water skins from the deep wells. When the way was desolate or lonely they all joined in singing hymns to the music of harps and drums.]

#### MEMORY LESSON.

His parents went every year to the feast at Jerusalem. When he was twelve years old they went as usual to the feast of the passover. When they went home the boy Jesus stayed behind in the city, and his parents knew it not, but, supposing him to be in the caravan, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him there among their friends; and when they found him not they went back to Jerusalem seeking for him. After three days they found him in the temple (God's holy house), sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking questions. All that heard him were amazed at his sayings. When Mary and Joseph saw him they were astonished, and the mother said: "Son, why hast thou thus troubled us? Thy father and I looked for thee sorrowing." Jesus said: "How is it that ye sought me? Did ye not know that I must be in my Father's house?" They understood him not; but Jesus must have begun even then to understand the need of his work among men as their Saviour. While Mary hid all his sayings in her heart, the child Jesus went home with them, and was obedient unto them.

#### LESSON III. (January 21.)

#### THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Luke 3. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Luke 3. 4.

#### Primary Notes.



tries where people know something and under-

*Introductory.* Who knows anything about road-making? What is a road for? Can one man build a wide, good road all by himself? No; it takes many men working together. Good roads are found in coun-

stand what is best for the place and the persons. In Africa, where the wild and savage black people live who know very little about anything good, there are only crooked, rough paths. If a log or stone is in the way, they go around it, and never think to move it. So it is very hard to travel in that country. A good road means a great deal of work. A straight, smooth way does not just happen to be in a certain place. It must be prepared, and if anything makes this rough, it must be cast out, so that people can pass along easily and safely. Long ago, when kings went on journeys in the Eastern lands, they sent a messenger, or, as he was called, a herald, to clear the way before the journey, and to see that the roads were smooth and ready.

Our lesson to-day is about preparing the way. It is written on our wall-roll, "Preparing the Way," and our Golden Text tells whose way. [Drill on these, with title of lesson.]

*The lesson.* [Give a very short account of John the Baptist, and explain the word "preaching." Describe his lonely life in the wilderness, alone with God much of the time, yet called often to preach to a great many people who came to hear him, and to ask, "What must we do?" Impress the truth that repentance was his text, meaning such sorrow for sin as would lead to putting it away, and teach that John was sent to make ready the way for Jesus in people's hearts by preaching to them that they must cast out what would keep the Lord from coming in. John did not prepare the way for himself, but for Jesus, saying, "One is coming who is mightier than I."]

*The way must be prepared.* Is everyone ready now to let the Lord Jesus come into the heart? Is this whole world prepared for him? No, indeed. There is much to be done before Jesus comes as King over all. He might do all the work himself, but he does not choose to. He will not do what he thinks best to have us do. He might have us live without eating, but he gives us food, and leaves us to eat it or not as we like. He gives what we need to make clothes, but does not make them for us. He stands ready to lead us, but wants us to put our hands in his of our own will. The Lord wants the way made ready for him in this world, and there are many things to be cast out in order to do this. Among other very great evils there are the saloon and the selling and drinking of strong drink. If these things were taken out of the way, O how soon Jesus might come into some places where now he is not seen or known. See this picture of a road, with stumbling-stones in it that need to be taken out of the way. This is the temperance road, but you see it is not clear. It needs to be

prepared. He another called fallen over that great stone in coming of Jesus taken out there of all, there are people only cast cleared for Jesus

*Who must prepare the way?* Workmen to make alone, as John ago. All must help. They can pray. The work every day some penance work.

O little work making the way into your own ready to help others. There are so between here and the boys.

"Take them out" "There are so" "Take one out" "ther, and they die" clear.

Try this plan a



Kind

GOLDEN TEXT: heart: for they shall "Shew me thy paths." Psa. 25. 4

SUPPLE

In the land where tom when a great to send a messenger might with a flour the people of that for the coming of

prepared. Here is the stone Strong Drink, and another called First Glass, for so many have fallen over that; and Afraid to Say No is another great stone in the way that is not clear for the coming of Jesus. Besides these large ones to be taken out there are many little ones, and, most of all, there are the little Don't Care stones. If people only cared enough, the way might be cleared for Jesus, but they don't.

*Who must prepare the way?* It takes many workmen to make a good road. One can't do it alone, as John prepared the way for Jesus long ago. All must work, and even children can help. They can love, and care, and work, and pray. The work cannot be done in a day, but every day something may be done for the temperance work.

O little workers, how many of you are busy making the way ready for Jesus? Let him come into your own hearts first. Then you will be ready to help others.

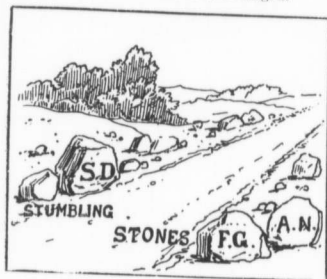
"There are so many stones in that path between here and the neighbor's," grumbled some boys.

"Take them out," said their father.

"There are so many," cried the boys.

"Take one out every time you pass," said father, and they did. By and by the way was all clear.

Try this plan and don't be discouraged.



### Kindergarten Hints.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Matt. 5. 8.

"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths." Psa. 25. 4.

### SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

In the land where Jesus lived it was the custom when a great ruler was coming into a town to send a messenger called a "herald," that he might with a flourish of trumpets announce to the people of that place, "Make the way ready for the coming of this mighty man;" and the

people would prepare to give their distinguished guest honors which we would call "patriotic." Men were also sent to mend roads or make paths for the great ruler, that he might ride safely to his journey's end. Emphasize: The way must be made SAFE. He must have a welcome. Jesus, the King of heaven, must have a herald to "go before" him, saying, "Make ye ready the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." People understood quite well the way to honor an earthly ruler. How do we honor the representative of the Queen? People understood not at all how to honor a heavenly ruler, though many of them had read or heard the Scripture promise of the coming of the Lord Christ. While a herald of an earthly ruler would make plans for a patriotic celebration, the herald of the Lord Christ could do nothing of the kind, even though he had the heart and courage of a soldier. His message would be: "Get your souls ready for the coming of the Lord. Confess and feel sorry for your sins. Only the pure in heart will be fit to receive the Christ."

Review the last lesson, and connect by stating that, while the boy Jesus was growing up in the carpenter's home in Nazareth, another boy in a distant village was growing sturdy and strong; for he had been promised of God, even before he came into the world, as a herald of Christ the Saviour. This promise of God was fulfilled at a very solemn time. A preacher, Zacharias, was praying in the church, and hundreds of people were praying outside, when an angel of the Lord appeared before Zacharias. This man was lonely, for he had no children. The angel brought him a message from the Lord.

### MEMORY LESSON.

When the angel appeared Zacharias was troubled and afraid. "Thou shalt have," said the angel, "a son, and shall call his name John. Thou shalt have joy and gladness in this son. Many shall rejoice at his birth. He shall be full of the Holy Spirit. Many shall he turn from evil ways to the Lord. He comes to turn hearts from disobedience, to make people ready for the Lord."

### SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

The praying people wondered why the preacher stayed so long in the church. When Zacharias came out he could not speak to them. When the son was born, and Zacharias, as the angel had said, could speak again, he told about the angel's message that this son was the herald of the Lord Christ. All that heard these things treasured them in their hearts, saying, "What, then, shall this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

"Thou, child," said Zacharias, "shall be called

the prophet of the Most High; for thou shalt go before the Lord to make ready his ways."

When the child grew to be a young man he went to live in a place where he could think and pray all the days without being disturbed. We describe the desert, food, and raiment of John, and keep before the class the purpose of John in waiting to be sent as herald. The people saw that a strange, wild-looking man came out of the desert. He wore a dress of skins, carried a staff, and stood on the river bank shouting to the people who crowded around him. Look at this picture and see the faces of his listeners. They look frightened, sorry, interested, astonished. Why? What is John saying? Quote Mark 1. 2 and Luke 3. 5. That sounds like the message of a herald. "Make the way ready. Make the paths straight." Shall they begin to make new roads, and prepare for a patriotic welcome? John holds them spellbound with his message. It is an object lesson about paths and ways. The way for the Christ must be made straight into their souls. The crooked ways of sin must be made straight, and rough paths of disobedience must be smoothed out. Those who were truly sorry for sin, and ready to be made pure in heart, fit to meet the Christ, were baptized as a sign of their promise.

"What else must we do," said the listeners, "to make the way ready and the paths straight?" "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him feed the hungry." "Are you the Christ?" asked the people. "I am only his herald. I am unworthy to unloose his shoes," said John.

John preached day after day, heralding the Christ who should soon come among them, even to that very river bank where they were pledging by baptism to make the way ready.

#### LESSON IV. (January 28.)

### THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS. Matt. 3. 13 to 4. 11.

GOLDEN TEXT. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3. 17.

#### Primary Notes.



heard her mother's voice. Mamma's hands were busy with some knitting that she could do in the

dark, but she sang to her baby and the wee girl was not afraid. She knew the voice. She would have cried if a stranger had called to her in a loud tone, but now she was quieted and went to sleep.

Another, an older child, was away from home. Some one wanted the little visitor to do wrong. "I can't do it," was the answer. "Why not?" came the question. "I can hear mamma's voice in my heart, saying, 'Don't,' and I always listen to mamma's voice."

You understand, don't you, how we can hear a voice in our hearts, and know whose it is? There is one dear voice that often calls to us. It is our Father's voice, and it comes from heaven. See on our wall-roll to-day these words: "The Voice of God." In our text we will learn what words the Voice spoke. [Drill on this.] The Bible story to-day tells us something about Jesus which made his Father well pleased.

*The lesson.* [Describe vividly the coming of Jesus to John and asking to be baptized; John's reluctance, and the reason; and Jesus's desire to do everything well pleasing to God. Impress the children with the solemnity of the scene, and with deepest reverence of manner, tone, and feeling, picture the coming of the gentle dove, and the voice of God sounding from the sky, touching the hearts of those who heard, and now coming to our hearts to-day. Go on with the story of the temptation, following close after this wonderful time, and make clear the three temptations, in which Satan tried to make the Saviour use his great power at his enemy's command, also to run a foolish risk for sake of proving a promise, and, finally, to worship the evil one himself. These were only three of the many, many temptations of Satan, so that now the Lord Jesus knows just how to feel for those whom the evil one tempts in many ways.]

Especially impress the manner of fighting temptation with the word of God, rightly used, for Satan can use it wrongfully. Teach the little ones how to use Scripture, mentioning temptations apt to come to them, and the command or promise that may be used, as, when coaxed to disobey parents, remember the word, "Children obey your parents;" when tempted to be afraid, think of the word, "Fear not;" or to be cross, the command, "Be ye kind one to another."

When Satan found he could not make Jesus sin he left him. Then the angels from heaven came down to serve the Saviour. The place was lonely no longer. He was faint and hungry no longer, and again he must have heard his Father's voice saying, "I am well pleased."

Why was God well pleased? For two reasons, and he will be pleased with us, his little

children, his young ones, if we are the Son, did we want to please God? He had Nazareth, and we have Jerusalem, strange that Jesus should be pleased. If we life to do what God to do, it will grow more and more like Jesus did, but we are ing better.

Then Jesus prayed what he did, but would not listen would not give up not do wrong, I asked.

Now, if God ought we not to be and try to be like

*Listen for God's* from above. If because we do not alone from the sky the Jordan River, which is his word, We need never be him.

This is my beloved SON

Kinder

GOLDEN TEXT: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3. 17.

HINTS

The children at the Baptist's descent great deal of our help, bring it easily, heralding his glorious

children, his youngest children, for the same reasons, if we do as Jesus did. First, Jesus, the Son, did what the Father wished. It was to please God that Jesus came to be baptized. He had pleased his Father all his life in Nazareth, and while he grew in wisdom and stature, as we learned last Sunday. It was not strange that Jesus kept on doing what was well pleasing. If we begin at the very beginning of life to do what our Father in heaven wishes us to do, it will grow easier, and we shall love to do it more and more. We cannot do it perfectly, as Jesus did, but we can keep trying, and keep doing better.

Then Jesus pleased his Father, not only by what he did, but by what he would not do. He would not listen to Satan's temptations. He would not give up to that wicked one; he would not do wrong, no matter how often he was asked.

Now, if God was well pleased with Jesus, ought we not to be? Ought we not to love him, and try to be like him?

*Listen for God's voice.* Our Father speaks to us from above. If we do not hear his voice, it is because we do not listen. It will not sound aloud from the sky, as it did that day long ago by the Jordan River, but it will speak in the Bible, which is his word, and it will speak in our hearts. We need never be afraid of it if we are pleasing him.

Get ready to meet him." We also bring out the question of the listeners, "What shall we do?" with John's reply, "Repent of your sins, turn from disobedience, and be generous to the poor."

#### SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

Jesus had already left his home in Nazareth. We look at the picture, "Jesus's Farewell to his Mother," and we also study the picture of John preaching on the banks of the Jordan. Jesus is coming toward this river. With a diagram approximately correct in outline we show on the blackboard the direction in which Jesus would come from his home. Will all these people be ready in a few hours to meet the Christ? Many of them refuse to believe that the Christ is at hand, refuse to listen to his herald, refuse to get ready to meet their Lord. But many others are truly sorry for their sins, have been baptized, and watch prayerfully for the coming of the Lord.

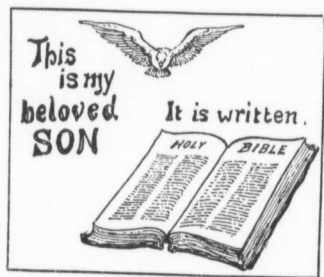
Even now, while the Christ is very near them, almost in sight, the believers who are trying to be pure in heart and fit for their Master's coming are entirely mistaken about the way of his coming. They look for One who will come like this: [Show picture of a king in a chariot leading his brave men to battle.] Walking quietly across the fields, coming quietly among John's listeners, who should know this gentle stranger? Do you think John knew him? Was there something in his face to show that he was the only one in that large gathering who was perfectly good?

#### MEMORY LESSON.

Then came Jesus from the home in Nazareth, to be baptized of John. But John would have hindered him, saying, "I need to be baptized, of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus said, "Allow it now, for we must carry out all right things." Then John allowed him. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up from the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

If the children have not been drilled on the lesson at home, we would prefer to postpone, for the present, the account of the temptation of Jesus. If, however, the children have heard it at home, we wish to avoid an occasion for the pitiful complaint, which has once or twice reached our ears, "Teacher did not hear me say my lesson."

We let the children who have been taught of the temptation of Jesus tell it in their own way.



#### Kindergarten Hints.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Psa. 91. 11.

#### HINTS ON METHOD.

The children are all so interested in John the Baptist's desert life that we can make a great deal of our review to-day, and, with their help, bring it easily to the point where John is heralding his glorious news, "Christ is coming.

Their ideas, if expressed with entire freedom, will help us in handling the subject more wisely. We avoid showing a picture of the descent of the Spirit, as their ideas are already proving that they grasp the material side of the picture at the expense of its spiritual lesson. When the Spirit of God rested on the head of Jesus he was given "all power in heaven and on earth." You have heard of the miracles of healing and saving. You may tell of one. Let us choose the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Before Jesus tried to use his great powers he was forced to go into a lonely place that he might, as we suppose from this lesson, understand better, after thinking and praying, what his great power could do for himself and for those he came to save. It was then he was tempted by the spirit of all evil to use his gifts selfishly—to take glorious things for himself. Why did Jesus come? Do you think he listened to the tempting thoughts? Jesus came out of that lonely place to give himself to his brothers and sisters all over the world. He comes gently and quietly among us every day. He asks us to notice the things that hinder us from helping our brothers and sisters, and to give them up, following in his footsteps.

### Whisper Songs for January.

#### FIRST LESSON.

On a far-off Christmas day  
Jesus in a manger lay,  
And the angels at his birth  
Sung the song of "Peace on earth."

#### SECOND LESSON.

Like a lily in the sun  
Grew in grace the Holy One,  
In the grace of Jesus so  
May his little children grow.

#### THIRD LESSON.

When a holy voice is sent  
Saying to our hearts, "Repent,"  
Jesus, Saviour, take us in  
Save thy little flock from sin.

#### FOURTH LESSON.

When the tempter's voice I hear,  
Jesus, Saviour, be thou near;  
Let thy holy voice within  
Be my sure defense from sin.

### Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

#### First Quarter.

*Teacher.* The Lord is my shepherd;

*Class.* I shall not want.

*T.* He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

*C.* He leadeth me beside the still waters.

*T.* He restoreth my soul:

*C.* He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

*T.* Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

*C.* For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

*T.* Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

*C.* Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

*T.* Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

*C.* And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

#### SONG OF PRAISE.\*

*T.* What is it to pray?

*C.* To speak with our Father in heaven.

*T.* In what spirit should we come to him?

*C.* In the spirit of loving reverence.

*T.* Let us all pray. (It is well to vary this service of prayer from time to time. Sometimes the teacher may lead in a concert prayer; again, a little prayer may be softly sung; and now and then an echo prayer may be offered. Always close the service with the Lord's Prayer.)

#### GIVING SONG.

(The children never seem to tire of "Hear the pennies dropping," sung as they march past teacher, who holds the receptacle to receive the offerings.)

#### BIRTHDAY OFFERING.

#### LESSON TAUGHT.

#### ECHO PRAYER.

SINGING. (A motion song preferably.)

GOLDEN TEXT DRILL—SUPPLEMENTARY WORK.

CLOSING WORDS (said or sung).

"Dear Saviour, ere we part,  
We lift our hearts to thee,  
In gratitude and praise,  
For blessings full and free.

"Go with us to our homes,  
Watch o'er and keep us there,  
And make us, one and all,  
The children of thy care."

MIZPAH.

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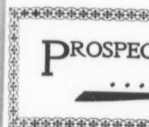
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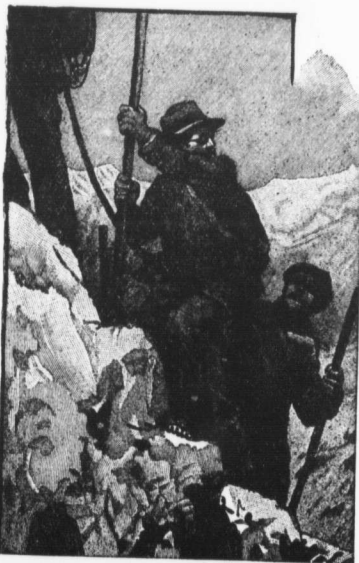
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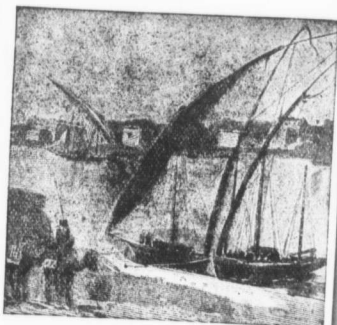


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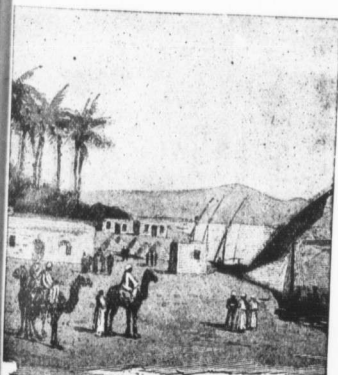
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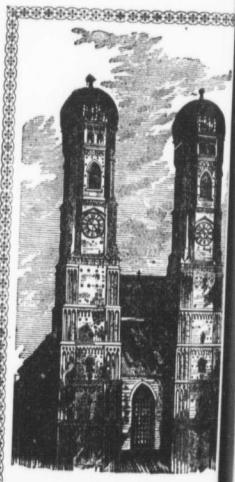
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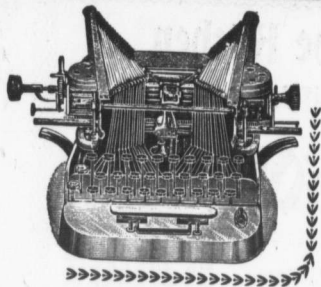
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