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The Teachers' Monthly.

UNITED CHURCH
ASSOCIATION

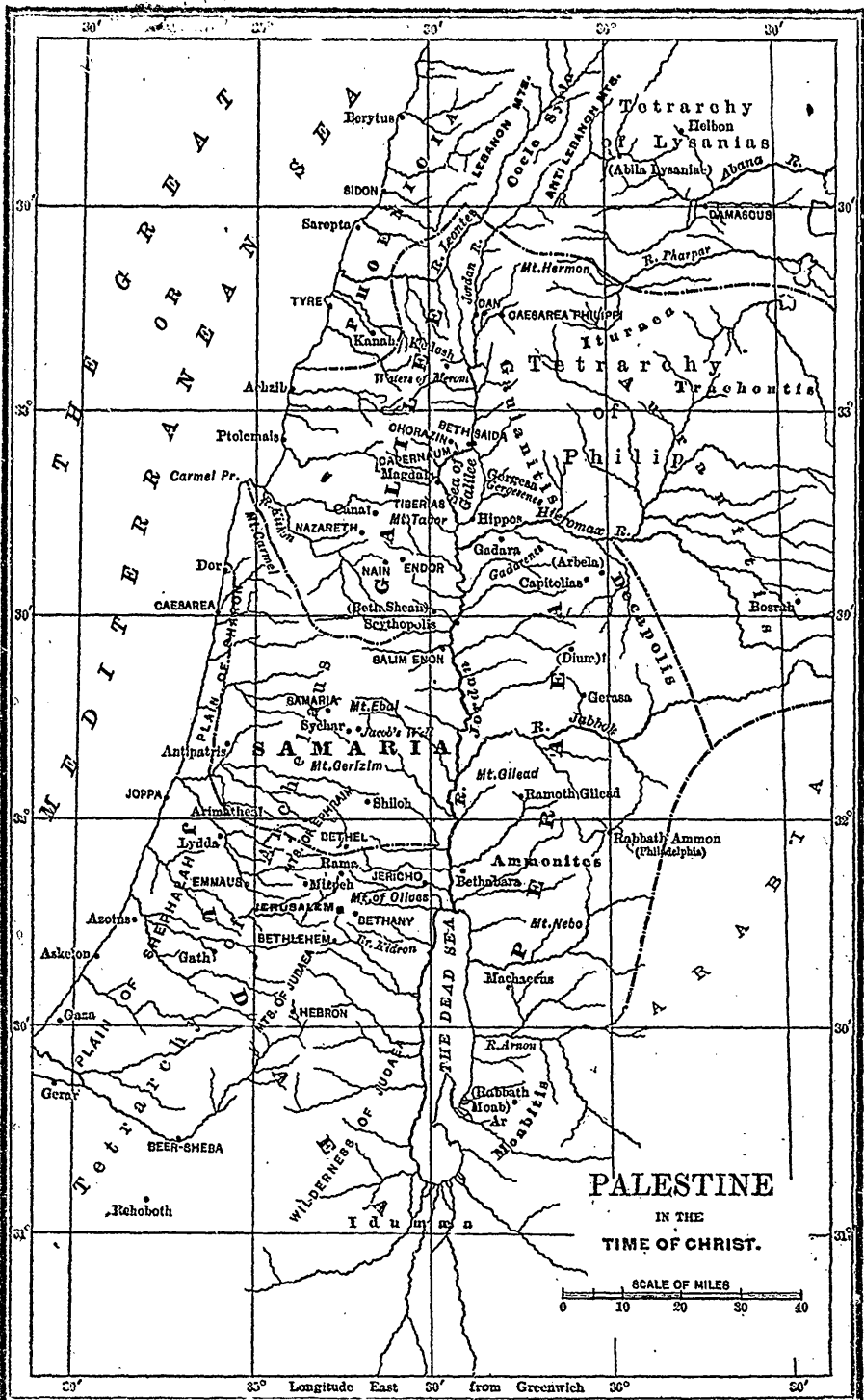
Vol. II.

JANUARY, 1896.

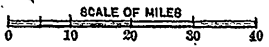
No. 1.

ORDER OF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

EVENTS.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Events preceding the birth of Jesus (I).....	_____	_____	1: 5-70	
Life of Christ until John the Baptist appears (II).....	1: 1-2, 23	_____	2: 1-52	
The ministry of John the Baptist (III).....	3: 1-12	1: 1-8	{ 1: 60 3: 1-22	
THE YEAR OF OBSCURITY.				
The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.....	3: 13-4: 11	1: 9-13	3: 21-4: 13	
First Disciples of Jesus.....	_____	_____	_____	1: 10-51
The marriage feast of Cana.....	_____	_____	_____	2: 1-12
First purging of the Temple. Discourse with Nicodemus.....	_____	_____	_____	2: 13-3: 21
Unrecorded ministry in Judea.....	_____	_____	_____	3: 22-36
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THE YEAR OF POPULARITY.				
Healing of the nobleman's son.....	4: 17	1: 14-16	4: 14	4: 43-54
Rejection at Nazareth (IV).....	4: 18-16	0: 1-6	4: 15-31	
Miraculous draught of fishes.....	4: 18-22	1: 16-20	6: 1-11	
Healing of the demoniac and Peter's mother-in-law.....	{ 3: 14-17 4: 23-25	1: 21-30	4: 81-44	
Healing of a leper.....	3: 2-4	1: 40-46	5: 12-16	
Healing of a paralytic "borne of four" (V).....	9: 2-8	2: 1-12	5: 17-26	
Call of Matthew.....	9: 9	2: 13, 14	5: 27-28	
The infirm man at Bethesda.....	_____	_____	_____	5: 1-47
Healing the man with a withered hand.....	12: 1-21	{ 2: 23-28 3: 1-12	6: 1-11	
Sermon on the Mount (VI).....	{ 5: 1-7: 29 10: 2-4	3: 13-19	6: 12-49	
Healing the Centurion's servant (VII).....	8: 1, 5-13	_____	7: 1-10	
Raising widow's son at Nain (VII).....	_____	_____	7: 11-17	
Visit of disciples of John.....	11: 2-30	_____	7: 18-35	
Sinful woman forgiven.....	_____	_____	80-50	
"He casteth out devils by Beelzebub....."	{ 9: 35 12: 22-37	0: 6 3: 20-30	8: 1-3 11: 14-23 11: 24-36	
"Who is my mother and who are my brethren" ?.....	12: 38-50	3: 31-35	{ 8: 19-21 11: 37-18: 9	
Instructive discourses.....	_____	_____	12: 37-48	
Faithful and unfaithful servants (XII).....	_____	_____	8: 4-18	
Parable of the sower.....	18: 1-53	4: 1-34	{ 8: 22 9: 57-62 7: 22-25	
Christ stilling the tempest.....	8: 18-27	4: 35-41	8: 20-40	
Healing the Gadarene demoniac.....	8: 28-34	5: 1-20	8: 20-40	
Raising of Jairus' daughter.....	9: 1-26	{ 5: 21 2: 15-22 6: 22-43	5: 20-30 8: 41-56	
Two blind men healed.....	9: 27-31	_____	_____	
His works ascribed to Beelzebub.....	9: 32-34	_____	_____	
The apostles sent out.....	{ 9: 35-38 10: 1, 6-42	0: 7-13	9: 1-6	
Death of John the Baptist.....	14: 1-12	6: 14-31	9: 7-10	
Five thousand fed—Walking on the sea.....	14: 13-36	6: 32-56	9: 10-17	6: 1-21
Discourse on the Bread of Life.....	_____	_____	_____	6: 22-71
THE YEAR OF OPPOSITION.				
Healing daughter of Syrophenician woman.....	15: 1-39	7: 1-8: 10	_____	
Feeding four thousand.....	_____	_____	_____	
Various discourses.—Peter's confession (IX).....	16: 1-20	8: 11-30	9: 18-21	
Jesus foretells his death—The Transfiguration.....	{ 16: 21-28 17: 1-27	8: 31-38 9: 1-33	9: 22-45	
Contention for pre-eminence.....	18: 1-36	9: 33-50	9: 46-50	
The seventy disciples sent out.....	_____	_____	10: 1-16	
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Parable of the Good Samaritan (X).....	_____	_____	10: 25-37	
Teaching about prayer (XI).....	_____	_____	11: 1-13	



PALESTINE
 IN THE
 TIME OF CHRIST.

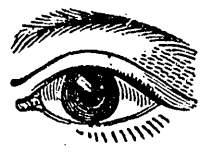


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PRIMARY REVIEW CHART - FIRST

I.
BY ALWAYS
PREPARING

XII.
BY ALWAYS
WATCHING



FOR JESUS

FOR JESUS.

XI.
BY ALWAYS
PRAYING



GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE

"Whosoever shall confess me

X.
BY ALWAYS
LOVING

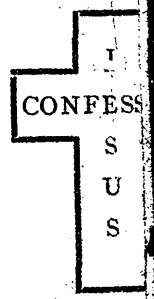


LIKE JESUS.

IX.
BY ALWAYS
LISTENING

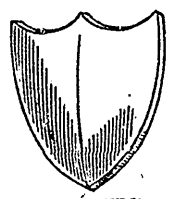


TO JESUS.



Son of man also confess before

VII.
BY ALWAYS
TRUSTING



JESUS.

VII.
BY ALWAYS
HELPING



LIKE JESUS

II.
BY ALWAYS
GROWING



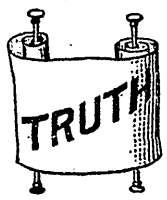
LIKE JESUS.

III.
BY ALWAYS
POINTING



TO JESUS.

IV.
BY ALWAYS
SPEAKING



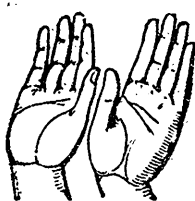
LIKE JESUS.

V.
BY ALWAYS
FORGIVING



LIKE JESUS.

VI.
BY ALWAYS
OBEYING



JESUS.

QUARTER:

more men, him shall the

angels of God."

Luke 12 : 9.

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON I—January 5th, 1896.

The Forerunner of Christ. LUKE 1: 5-17.

(Commit to memory verses 15 and 16).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." Luke 1: 76.

PROVE THAT—We should prepare for Christ's coming. Isa. 40: 3.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 39. *What is the duty which God requireth of man?* A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*. Nos. 248, 249, 26, 28.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday*. The Forerunner of Christ. Luke 1: 5-17. *Tuesday*. A wondrous infancy. Luke 1: 59-66. *Wednesday*. Prophecy of greatness. Luke 1: 67-80. *Thursday*. Service of the altar. Ex. 30: 1-10. *Friday*. The Lord's Messenger. Mal. 3: 1-6. *Saturday*. Promise of Elijah. Mal. 4. *Sabbath*. Christ's testimony to John. Matt. 11: 7-14. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. This Gospel was written by Luke, "the beloved physician" (Col. 4: 14), who was the companion of Paul, and also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The first two chapters have been called "The Gospel of the Infancy," because they narrate events connected with the birth and youth of Jesus.

LESSON PLAN. I. His Godly Parents. vs. 5-7. II. His Birth Announced. vs. 8-14. III. His Character Described. vs. 15-17.

I. HIS GODLY PARENTS. 5. There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea—This was Herod the Great. He was an I-du mae'an usurper and vassal of the Romans (Gen. 49: 10). He ruled also over Samaria, Galilee and Perea. The period was marked by intellectual activity, the universal rule of Rome, a high state of civilization, the decay of faith in idolatry, the dispersion of Jews everywhere disseminating some knowledge of the true God and prepared to form the nuclei of Christian Churches, and one language, the beautiful Greek, everywhere spoken (Gal. 4: 4). A certain priest named Zach-a-ri-as—(*The Lord remembers*). He was not the High Priest, but only "a certain priest." Of the course of A-bi'a or Abijah. The word "course" (*Ephemeris*) means first "a daily ministry," then a class of the priesthood which exercised its functions for a week. Aaron had four sons. The two eldest, Nadab and Abihu, were struck dead for using strange fire in the sanctuary (Lev. 18). From the two remaining sons, El-ez-a-zar and Ith'a-mar, had sprung, in the days of David, twenty four families, sixteen from the descendants of Eleazar, and eight from those of Ithamar. To these David distributed by lot the order of their service from week to week, each for eight days inclusively from Sabbath to Sabbath (1 Chr. 24: 1-19; 2 Chr. 31: 2). After the exile only four of the families were represented amongst the returned priests. These were then subdivided into twenty four courses and to these the original names were given (Neh. 13: 30). The course of Abia was the

eight. The chief priests, so often referred to in the gospels, were the heads of these courses, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron. Both John's parents were of priestly rank. And her name was Elizabeth—(*God is my oath*). This was the name of Aaron's wife (Ex. 6:23) "the mother of priesthood."

6. And they were both righteous before God—i. e. not merely according to human judgment, but before the eyes of God (Ps. 119: 6; 2 Cor. 1: 12) one of the oldest forms of high praise among the Jews (Gen. 6: 9; 7: 1; 18: 23-28; Ps. 37: 37; Ezek 18: 5-19). It is used also of Joseph (Matt. 1: 19). The "righteous man" was the ideal Jew. (Farrar). The inward reality of his righteousness corresponds to its perfect outward exhibition in conduct and religious observances. Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless—"Commandments" refers to the more general principles of the moral law to the decalogue for example (Rom. 8: 8-13); "ordinances" refers to the multitude of particular Levitical precepts (Heb. 9: 1). (Godet). This distinction was not accurately kept, but the two words together would, to a pious Jew of that day, have included all the positive and negative precepts, which the later rabbis said were 613 in number, namely 248 positive, and 365 negative. (Farrar). "Walking" is a Hebrew metaphor for the whole outward conduct. "Blameless" does not mean sinless (Phil. 3: 6) but that their lives were above reproach.

7. And they had no child, because

Elizabeth was barren—God had withholden from them that which they rightly esteemed the greatest earthly blessing. To have no children was also considered a reproach and a mark of the divine displeasure (Ps. 127: 3, 5; 1 Sam. 1: 7, 8; Gen. 30: 1). **And they both were now well-stricken in years** This is a quaint old English expression for "were growing old," had passed the meridian of life (Gen. 18: 11; 24: 1; Josh 13: 1; 1 Kings 1: 1).

II. HIS BIRTH ANNOUNCED. 8. And it came to pass that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course—His course was the eighth in order.

9. According to the custom of the priests' office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord—The whole number of priests was about 20,000, and so this much-coveted office was not permitted to anyone a second time. The celebrant was chosen by lot each morning and evening. For the altar of incense see Ex. 30: 1-10. For the composition of incense see Ex. 30: 34, and for its symbolic meaning see Ps. 141: 2; Mal. 1: 11; Heb. 9: 4; Rev. 8: 3, 4. King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for usurping this sacred function (2 Chr. 26: 18). "The temple"—R. V. marg. "the sanctuary"—the shrine, or Holy Place. Here stood the golden table with shew-bread on the right, or north side, and the golden candlestick on the left. As the number of priests was very large, some say 20,000, this lot would not likely fall to anyone twice in a lifetime.

10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense—This would indicate that the day in question was a Sabbath or some high day. The worshippers assembled in the outer courts were engaged in silent prayer while the incense was being offered (Rev. 8: 1-4; Isa. 66: 7; Neh. 11: 17; Matt. 21: 13).

11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord. Scripture assures us that we are surrounded with angels who minister to our welfare, and it is not strange if on fitting occasions they should become visible (Godet). That this was not a vision arising out of the exalted spiritual condition of Zacharias is evident from his fear, his unwillingness to believe the message and the physical infirmity that followed. Luke dwells more than any other of the evangelists on the ministry of angels. Compare the births of Isaac, Samson and Samuel. **Standing on the right side of the altar of incense** This may refer to the position of the altar itself—he stood on its right, or south side; or, as most understand it, to the position of Zacharias—at his right hand, therefore, on the north side of the altar, between it and the table of shew-bread. The right was regarded as the propitious side (Mk. 16: 5; Matt. 25: 33). The fact that Zacharias noted so accurately the exact position of the angel vouches for his clearness of perception and sobriety of mind. (Van Oosterzee).

12. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him—The fear of Zacharias proceeds from the consciousness of sin, which is immediately awakened in the human mind when a supernatural manifestation puts it in direct contact with the divine world. (Godet). (Judges 13: 22; Dan. 10: 7-9; Ezek. 1: 28; Mark 16: 8; Acts 10: 4; Rev. 1: 17).

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son The reference is to the prayer then and there offered by Zacharias. We do not think that this prayer was for a child to himself for (1) it would have been unbecoming for the officiating priest, in such a solemn function, voicing the prayers of all Israel, to introduce such a private matter; (2) he would probably have ceased, by this time, to pray for what, by the laws of nature, God seemed finally to have denied him; and (3) his incredulity at the angel's announcement is proof that he did not look for such a communication. On the other hand it is urged that the natural suggestion of the angel's words is that a certain definite prayer for a son receives a precise answer. Still we prefer to think that the burden of his prayer at such a time was, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion" (Ps. 14: 7). **And thou shalt call his name John**—(*The grace of Jehovah*). Same as Johanan (1 Chr. 3: 24), and Jonah (Matt. 16: 17, comp. John 1: 42 R. V.).

14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness—Rather "exultation" (verse 44; Acts 2: 46; Heb. 1: 9). **And many shall rejoice at his birth**—Many shall have reason to be glad that he was born. His preaching would awaken repentance and lead them to the Saviour. The personal influence of John was short-lived, but the angel views his brief ministry as part of the Messianic kingdom.

III. HIS CHARACTER DESCRIBED. 15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord—This indicates the spiritual nature of his office and influence (Alford). A greatness from personal holiness and the moral authority accompanying it. (Godet). (Luke 7: 28). **And shall drink neither wine nor strong drink**—The Nazarite vow is prescribed in Num. 6: 2-21. It involved (1) abstinence from wine and strong drink; (2) refraining from cutting the hair off the head during the whole continuance of the vow; (3) the avoidance of contact with the dead. There is no mention of any Nazarite before Samson (Judges 13: 4, 5), who with Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 11) were the only two life long Nazarites mentioned in the Old Testament. (Easton). "Strong drink" includes all kinds of fermented liquors not made from grapes. Wyclif translates the word "cider." The word is specially applied to palm wine. The art of distilling alcohol was unknown to the ancients. **And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb**—The contrast between the false and hateful excitement of drunkenness

and the divine exaltation of spiritual fervor is also found in Eph. 5: 18, compare Acts 2:13 (Farrar). (Isa. 11: 2; Joel 2: 28). "The fact related in verses 41-44 is the beginning of the accomplishment of this promise, but it in no way exhausts its meaning." (Godet). This does not refer to inspiration for that came to John at a later period (ch. 3: 2), but it means sanctification, or accepted consecration of the infant before, or at, birth, "a truth of high import in personal Christianity, of weighty bearing on the standing of the infants of believers in the church of God, and ministering precious encouragement to pious parents." (J. F. and B.)

16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God—These words resume the thread of prophecy which had been broken for three centuries (Mal. 4: 6) John's preaching awoke a revival that stirred all classes and turned the thoughts of men Christ-ward.

17. And he shall go before him—i. e. before "the Lord their God." (Zech. 14: 5). Jesus was "Emanuel," "God with us." See Mal. 3: 1, where the Messiah is no other than Jehovah himself. **In the spirit and power of Elias**—From the last words of Malachi (4: 4-6; 3: 1) the Jews universally believed (as they do to this day) that Elijah would visibly return to earth as a herald of the Messiah. It required the explanation of our Lord to open the eyes of the Apostles on the subject (Matt. 11: 14; 17: 10-14). The resemblance was partly of external aspect (2 Kings 1: 8; Matt. 3: 4); and partly in his mission of stern rebuke and invitation to repentance (1 Kings 18: 21; 21: 20). (Farrar). **To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children—i. e. as in the original meaning of Malachi, to remedy disunion and restore family life.** (Farrar).

But Godet says: Nothing either in the ministry of Elijah or John the Baptist had any special aim in this direction. Such a result had no direct connection with the preparation for the work of the Messiah, and bears no proportion to the threat which follows in Malachi, "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Lastly, the parallelism of the passage requires that the term "the rebellious" should characterize "the children," and we cannot suppose that this would be true of any large number of Jewish families. The true sense, he takes to be, "the fathers" means the ancients, the patriarchs, who are ashamed of their degenerate descendants and regard them, in figure, with averted faces. These will again turn towards them with satisfaction in consequence of the change produced by the ministry of John (John 8: 56; Isa. 29: 22; 63: 16). "his view seems fanciful. Calvin and others interpret the expression to mean that he will restore the pious dispositions of the fathers to their descendants. But this is not what the words say. The hearts of the fathers are to be influenced. The majority of commentators take the first view mentioned. He would revive family affection by arousing both parents and children to a real anxiety about their salvation. **And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just**—The disobedient is a general term for all who are in rebellion against God. The "wisdom of the just" is that healthy appreciation of things which is the privilege of upright hearts. (Godet). **To make ready a people prepared for the Lord**—John prepares the people in such a way that they are disposed to receive the Messiah. (Godet). All would be ready to listen to Christ's offer of salvation when John had made them feel their need of it.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *Religion makes happy and beautiful every home in which it dwells.* The charm of Burns' "Cottar's Saturday Night" lies in the simple, unaffected piety of the inmates. When love to God and reverence for holy things rule the heart they sweeten and enhance every affection. They teach kindness, forbearance, unselfishness, contentment and cheerfulness. There are no more powerful influences than the memories of godly parents and home religious teaching. Those who their children of priceless blessings who do not maintain family worship, ask God's blessing at meals, and talk with their families about the Bible and religious truth.

2. *God's angels are sent to minister to his people.* They frequently become visible, but their invisible presence is a fact beyond question. If we are on our guard against impropriety when in the presence of someone of high character or exalted position, how much more should we act circumspectly under the eyes of the holy beings who see the face of

God. On the other hand, this truth is full of comfort and encouragement. Our spiritual enemies are met and foiled by our spirit allies. They are present to avert evil in many forms, and are swift to do on our behalf the behests of our loving Father.

3. *God will answer every prayer as far as it is for his own glory and our good.* Adoniram Judson says: "I never was deeply interested in any object, I never prayed sincerely or earnestly for anything but it came, at some time, no matter at how distant a day; somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, it came."

"In spite of many broken dreams,
This have I truly learned to say:
The prayers I thought unanswered once,
Were answered in God's own best way."

The answers always exceed our expectations. He gives abundantly. Among the treasures of an Oriental prince was an iron ball. Touch a spring and it opened, disclosing a silver

box inside; touch a spring in this, and lo, a golden ball was uncovered, and this, on opening, was found to contain rare and precious gems.

4. *No one is too young to be filled with the Holy Spirit.* Perhaps one reason why our young people remain so long in an uncertain relation to Christ and the church is that we have not expected and prayed that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit from their birth. We have acted as though the Holy Spirit could do nothing until, by voluntary choice, they deliberately opened their hearts to him. And so we have waited, and taught them to wait, until "years of discretion" were arrived at before their decision for Christ was to be looked for. If believing parents would only realize the precious right which they exercise when they present their children for baptism, and the covenant blessings sealed to them in the sacrament, they would not hesitate to pray and labor and look for the presence and power of the Spirit in every babe.

5. *Repentance must precede pardon and acceptance with God.* "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." No man who has done evil in any way can be restored to forfeited favor but by repentance. No parent would feel that he could receive

back to his confidence a disobedient child that was not sorry for his fault, not merely because of its consequences in the way of punishment, but because it was an offence against love and law. Until he is convinced that he regrets what he has done, and is resolved not to do it again, the father's heart is not satisfied. It is universally true that where there is no repentance there can be no real pardon.

ADDED POINTS.

1. Piety is possible even in "the days of Herod the King."
2. The only righteousness that is worth anything is that which God takes note of.
3. Christ is "our righteousness," before the law of God.
4. Our disappointments should throw us back on God's wisdom and love.
5. The house of God is the scene of many heavenly interviews.
6. The highest service demands that we abstain from that which is a source of danger and moral death.
7. We can all prepare the way for Christ in our own hearts and the hearts of others.
8. True religion will make the home life happier.
9. The folly of a disobedient spirit.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS.

Was Luke a Jew? (Col. 4: 11, 14). What was his profession? What other book of the New Testament did he write? To whom did he write them? Of which apostle was he a companion? For what people was this gospel written? What do you know about Herod? Who was Zacharias? What is meant by "the course" of Abia? Who was Aaron? Who also bore the name of Elisabeth? (Ex. 6: 23). What is meant by "the order of his course"? What is meant by "his lot"? What was the law regarding incense? (Ex. 30: 34-38). Where was it offered? With what fire was it kindled? Who offered "strange fire before the Lord"? Give another instance of the appearance of this angel? (Dan. 8: 15-18; 9: 21-23; Luke 1: 26-29). What other angel is named in the Bible? (Dan. 10: 13, 21; 12: 1; Jude 9; Zech. 3: 2; Rev. 12: 7). Where did the altar of incense stand? What stood on the north side, and what on the south? Why was Z. troubled and afraid? For what had he been praying? Why would he have joy and gladness? Why would many rejoice at his birth? What was the law of the Nazarite? (Num. 6: 1-5). What other instances of abstinence from wine in O. T.? (Lev. 10: 9; Jer. 35). What proof of the divinity of Christ is found in our lesson? Explain the meaning of the last verse.

THE BLACKBOARD.

Sum up the facts about John:

Brought **J**oy and gladness

Drank n **O**wine

Filled with the **H**oly Spirit

Preached repe **N**tance

"Be filled with the Spirit."

LESSON II—January 12th, 1896.

The Boy Jesus. LUKE 2 : 40-52.

(Commit to memory verses 51 and 52).

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

PROVE THAT—We should obey our parents. Eph. 6. 1.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 40. *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?* A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal.* Nos. 33, 232, 215, 207.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Boy Jesus. Luke 2 : 40-52. *Tuesday.* The Passover feast. Deut. 16 : 1-8. *Wednesday.* Youthful piety. 2 Cor. 34 : 1-7. *Thursday.* Seeking after wisdom. Prov. 4 : 1-13. *Friday.* The Father's business. John 5 : 17-24. *Saturday.* The best knowledge. 2 Tim. 3 : 10-17. *Sabbath.* Growing in grace. 2 Pet. 3 : 11-18. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. The incident of our lesson marks Christ's coming of legal age and his entrance upon Jewish citizenship. With his first passover he assumed the duties of a full member of the Jewish church. Of the preceding years since the return to Nazareth we know nothing. Nor have we any information of the next eighteen. This is the solitary notice of the life of our Lord between the return from Egypt and his baptism at the age of thirty. It was a memorable crisis in his religious life and the story should be full of instruction to those especially who have passed the age of twelve and have not yet taken their places at the Christian Passover, the Lord's Supper.

LESSON PLAN. I. Jesus at the Feast. vs. 40-45. II. Jesus in the Temple. vs. 46-50. III. Jesus at Nazareth. vs. 51-52.

I. JESUS AT THE FEAST. 40. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit (R. V. omits "in spirit"), filled with wisdom—He developed in body, mind and soul like any other child. The literal rendering, "becoming full of wisdom," suggests a process, a gradual maturing of the faculties. It is impossible for us to conceive of this growth correctly for it must have involved a clearer and clearer consciousness of his true nature, along with the changes common to all men. This single sentence sums up all we know of the first twelve years and a similar verse at the end of our lesson describes the remainder of his life up to his baptism. Scripture reverently conceals what it would not profit us to know, or might be beyond our comprehension. The attempt to penetrate this mystery must be futile. It has been the source of many heresies and is not without danger in the present day. And the grace of God was upon him—Here for the first time upon earth we have a human child whose growth in mind or body is not warped by sin. In him God sees his creative ideal realized. (Godet). "The grace of God," the favor and blessing of God (Matt. 3 : 17; Ps. 5 : 12; 30 : 5; 106 : 4; Isa. 11 : 2, 3; John 1 : 14). "Upon him" marks the energy with which the grace of God rested on the child, penetrating his entire being. (Godet).

41. Now his parents—Joseph would be reputed to be his father and spoken of as such. Mary so speaks in verse 48. The law did not require women to go up to the three great feasts (Ex. 23 : 15-17; 34 : 23; Deut. 16 : 1, 16).

Mary probably made the journey because of her piety. (Compare Hannah 1 Sam. 1 : 7). Went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover—The words imply that it was their habitual custom. The law was strictly observed in that home at Nazareth. For an account of the institution see Ex. 12.

42. And when he was twelve years old—"The stages of Jewish childhood are marked as follows:—At three the boy was weaned and wore for the first time the fringed or tasselled garment prescribed by Num. 15 : 38-41; and Deut. 22 : 12. His education began at first under the mother's care. At five he was to learn the law, at first by extracts, written on scrolls, of the more important passages, the Shema, or creed of Deut. 2 : 4, the Hallel, or festival Psalms (114-118, 136), and by catechetical teaching in school. At twelve he was more directly responsible for his obedience to the law, and on the day when he attained the age of thirteen, put on for the first time the phylacteries which were worn at the recital of his daily prayer." (Ellicott). They went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast—R. V. omits "to Jerusalem." It cannot be inferred from this narrative, that it was the first time the Holy Child had accompanied them to the passover. (Alford).

43. And when they had fulfilled the days—The feast lasted seven days (Ex. 12 : 15, 17). They were not in duty bound to stay so long; they might have gone back sooner without blame. But devout people, as they were, do not consider how little of their time they can give to God without doing wrong,

but give him as much as ever they can, and delight in worshipping him. (Goulburn). **As they returned**—lit. "in their returning." **The child Jesus**—R. V. "the boy Jesus." Hitherto he had been called "a little boy," but now he is a youth. **Tarried behind in Jerusalem**—The words do not imply that he intentionally staid behind. He was so absorbed in the ceremonies, every one of which was so eloquent of meaning to him, and so interested in the discussions of the rabbis that he did not notice that his caravan had started for home. Some suppose that it was at this period that self-recognition took place within him and he fully realized who he was. If this was the case his oblivion to all other matters is easily understood. **And Joseph and his mother knew not of it**—R. V. "his parents." Their ignorance does not imply carelessness. A boy of twelve, in the east, is much more mature than one of the same age is with us and would be trusted alone anywhere. Besides, Jesus was doubtless thought ful beyond his years, and his parents would have little anxiety about him.

44. But they supposing him to have been in the company—Caravan of fellow travellers. This was probably large. Galilee contained, according to Josephus, more than 4,000,000 inhabitants, and its quota of pilgrims would be many thousands. At the passover, the population of Jerusalem was sometimes increased from 120,000, to 2,700,000 males alone. **Went a day's journey**—Tradition points out Bee'roth (*The wells*) as the place where Jesus was missed. It was 9 miles north of Jerusalem. **And they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance**—The word implies anxious and careful search.

45. And when they found him not they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him—The words grammatically mean that their object in returning to Jerusalem was to search for the boy. The word for "seek" indicates an earnest and prolonged search for a thing. These graphic verbal touches are worth noting.

II. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE. 46. And it came to pass, that after three days—The first day was occupied in the journey to Bee'roth, part of the second in the return, and on the third they found him. Compare the time between the crucifixion and the resurrection, Matt. 27: 63; Mark 8: 31. **They found him in the temple**—He had gone there as usual, forgetting all about the return journey. He was probably in one of the porches in the court of the women, where the schools of the rabbis were held, and the law regularly expounded. (Lange). **Sitting**—The customary attitude of a pupil, Acts 22: 3. **In the midst of**—As we would say "amongst." He was one of the crowd of inquiring students around one or more of the rabbis. **The doctors**—The rabbis, or (R. V. marg.) "teachers." The professional expounders of the law, by whom, as a "son of the law" he

would be welcomed. They kept a kind of open free school for all such. **Both hearing them and asking them questions**—The rabbinical method of teaching was Socratic. Both master and pupil had an opportunity of showing their sagacity and penetration of thought. Every teacher likes to have the scholar ask good questions (Matt. 7: 28; Mark 1: 22; Luke 4: 22, 32; John 7: 13, 46).

47. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers—"Jesus had given some remarkable answer, or put some original question; and as is the case when a particularly intelligent pupil presents himself, he had attracted for the moment all the interest of his teachers." (Godet). Compare Matt. 7: 28; Mark 1: 22; John 7: 15. The marvellous insight into the meaning of God's word which the Divine Child displayed arose, not from miraculous enlightenment but, from the complete harmony of his sinless nature with the spirit of his Father's teaching. He did not assume to teach the rabbis, but seeing with clearer spiritual vision than they, his answers were a revelation to them of old truths in a new light altogether, and his "pure questions of innocence and truth keenly and deeply penetrated into the confused errors of the rabbinical teaching." (Stier).

48. And when they saw him they were amazed—R. V. "astonished." But this is not the same word as in the previous verse. "Struck with amazement" would express it better. "Used of glal amazement." (Thayer). **And his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?**—better "Child, why hast thou, etc." Her joy quenches her anxiety and her resentment. It is the mildest possible reproach, and, as such, exquisitely befitting the lips of the gentle mother of Jesus. **Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing**—The only way in which Mary could speak before strangers. It may be that the reply of Jesus was intended to hint that that name should no longer be applied to Joseph, but this we cannot help feeling would have been almost indelicately harsh on his part, and uncalled for in the circumstances. He continued to give Joseph all the reverence due to a parent.

49. And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me—"Did you not know where I was most likely to be?" He reminds them of a knowledge that they possessed of his divine origin and work. These are the first recorded words of Christ. **Wist ye not**—"Did you not know" **That I must**—"Because that should chiefly engage my attention now when I am about to enter upon my public life as a "son of the law." John 4: 34; 6: 38; 8: 29. Notice how often Christ speaks of the moral necessity under which he acts, Matt. 16: 21; 26: 54; Mark 8: 31; Luke 4: 43; 9: 22; 13: 33; 24: 7; 26: 46; John 3: 14; 4: 4; 12: 34. (M. R. Vincent). **Be about my Father's business**—R. V. "in my Father's house." The word for "business"

or "house" is not expressed in the original. In favor of the former it is urged that it expresses the keynote of his ministry and is thus peculiarly appropriate now the consciousness of his real Sonship had fully burst upon him and he enters upon his life of filial obedience; and that the local sense is fully implied, "where my Father's affairs are carried on, there you might have known that his son would be found (John 2: 15). The latter view is however, adopted by the majority of commentators, because it gives the most natural and direct answer to Mary's question and is also a more usual rendering of the Greek phrase. Rationalists find nothing in the words but the pious sentiments of a precocious youth. But if this had been all their meaning, Joseph and Mary would have understood him easily.

50. And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them—They did not know the full meaning of "his Father's business." Compare similar instances ch. 9: 45; 18: 34, where we find the language clear enough.

III. JESUS AT NAZARETH. 51. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them—(Ex. 20: 12; Prov. 1: 8; Col. 3: 20; Luke 2: 19). "Learning the carpenter's trade and working at the carpenter's bench (Mark 6: 3). Living a century and a half later, Justin Martyr speaks of the plows and yokes the Master's own hands had fashioned during the eighteen years of retirement at Nazareth (Phil. 3: 7; Isa. 53: 2). From this time Jesus's name is

not mentioned. It is supposed that he died before the beginning of our Lord's public ministry. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart—The word is intensive, she kept them carefully so that she never forgot them. "She waited in brave and constant patience for the hour when her God should grant her to see face to face the mysterious things she had hitherto seen only in a glass darkly. (Spence).

52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man—"Increased" is literally "kept advancing." The word is used for pioneers hewing down trees and brushwood which obstruct the path of an advancing army (1 Sam. 2: 26; Prov. 3: 34). "Favor" is the same word as "grace" in verse 40. It is here applied to human approval as well as divine. "The home of Jesus was no ordinary home. With Joseph to guide and support, with Mary to hallow and sweeten it, with the youthful Jesus to illuminate it with the very light of heaven, we may well believe that it was a home of trustful piety, of angelic purity, of almost perfect peace; a home for the sake of which all the earth would be dearer to the watchers and holy ones, and where, if the fancy be permitted to us, they would love to stay their waving wings. The legends of early Christianity tell us that night and day where Jesus moved and Jesus slept, the cloud of light shone round about him. And so it was; but that light was no visible shechinah; it was the beauty of holiness; it was the peace of God." (Farrar).

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *Jesus cared for the body.* He "grew and waxed strong," he "increased in stature" as well as "in wisdom." His healthy physical development is noted as part of his perfect nature. So intimately are our two natures blended together that a moral fault inevitably produces a physical blemish, and often a perverted taste, or besetting sin, in mature years is to be traced to some neglect, or illusage, to the body or brain during childhood. We should impress upon our scholars the duty of avoiding everything that injures the body, since Jesus honored it by taking it, and redeeming it, and now wearing it in heaven.

2. *Jesus studied his lessons.* He was evidently well educated. He could speak three languages, if not four, his native *Aramaic*, the ancient *Hebrew*, for he always quotes from the Hebrew Bible; the *Greek*, the language of the translation of the Bible in common use and the tongue of the learned; and *Latin*, the language of the Roman rulers of the land. It is distinctly stated that he grew in "wisdom." He did not "hate to go to school." There were just as pleasant rambles out of doors at Nazareth as anywhere, but Jesus preferred to lay in a good store of knowledge when he was young that he might be the more useful when

he grew up. We may be quite sure that he could not have spoken so many wise and beautiful things if he had neglected his tasks at school.

3. *Jesus read his Bible well.* The wise and learned rabbis at Jerusalem were astonished "at his understanding and answers." "Although he was the Son of God, he felt the need of Bible study; and, feeling that need, he went into the Bible school, where the need could be met. If there is a man nowadays who thinks that he does not need Bible study, or that it is beneath his dignity to be in the Bible school, he either seems to suppose that he knows more than Jesus knew, or he seems to count it hardly safe to be on the same plane with the Son of God. Yet there are men and women who put a high value on worship, and none at all—for themselves—on social Bible study. They are regularly at the preaching services, but never in the Sunday school. Poor, needy, conceited creatures!" (H. C. Trumbull).

4. *Jesus went to church with his parents.* We find him here in the temple and in after life it was his custom to go to the synagogue every Sabbath day. "As soon as he was old enough to join in public worship, his parents

took him with them to the temple. It was not enough to set him a good example. They proposed to *train* him in the right way. Whatever a child ought to do, his parents ought to see that he does do. If he likes to do it, so much the better. If he does not like to do it, so much the more need is there that his parents should make him do it. Prayer and praise and reverence and devotion—obedience and right being and right doing in all things at home, and worship and attentive hearing in the house of God, are duties which parents ought to see that their children attend to. If the children fail in these things, the parents cannot count themselves free of responsibility of blame." (H. C. Trumbull).

5. *Jesus made public profession of his faith.* At the age of twelve or thirteen a Jewish boy was considered old enough to assume the duties required of every member of the Jewish church. At about the same age all Christian churches have agreed that young people should be prepared to assume for themselves the obligations involved in their baptism. Neither the church purity or spiritual power, nor the religious welfare of the young are promoted by the too prevalent custom of discouraging the approach to the Lord's table of the "children of the covenant" until they have passed their "teens," or nearly so. If our young people were taught to prepare their hearts for this ordinance, and their parents, teachers and pastors expected them to shew signs of grace at this age, they would rise to our expectations and according to our faith the Spirit would bless them.

6. *Jesus was obedient to his parents and obliging to everybody.* There are some things

that we never learn unless we learn them in childhood and obedience is one of these. In after years we may be forced to submit to the will of others, but happy acquiescence in the decrees of lawful authority is a habit of soul that must be formed by the wise and loving exercise of parental control. In Jesus filial submission was no irksome bondage. Conscious as he now was of his divine origin he fulfilled all the duties of the home relationship. What an example of "fulfilling all righteousness" that he might lead us to follow in his footsteps. When he "grew in favor with men" we may be sure that he was as obliging and kind to everybody as he was to those at home. Nothing will make people love one so much as acts of love and good nature.

ADDED POINTS.

1. The opportunities of childhood do not return.
2. God's favor and blessing rest on all who try to do right.
3. Families should worship together.
4. Those who wish to come to church or Sabbath school will easily overcome difficulties in the way.
5. Jesus never complained that the service was too long.
6. He tried to understand his Bible and asked questions about its meaning.
7. No one is too young to love and serve God.
8. Boys and girls of twelve years old should be ready to confess Christ.
9. There is nothing brave or manly in self-will or disobedience.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS.

What sign was given to Zacharias that the angel's words would come true? Why was it necessary that Jesus should be born at Bethlehem? How did God bring it about that he should be born there? What persons paid homage to the infant Saviour? Who sought to put him to death, and why? How was he delivered from him? Why did his parents decide to take up their home in Nazareth and not at Bethlehem? (Matt. 2: 22). How did this decision affect the religious training of Jesus? What effect would his natural and social surroundings have upon his mental development? What effect did his upbringing at Nazareth have upon his reception by the Jews? At what feasts were the Jews required to repair to Jerusalem? (Ex. 23: 14, 17). To what Christian feast does the passover correspond in meaning? (1 Cor. 5: 7). At what were the rabbis astonished? At what were Joseph and Mary amazed? Explain Jesus' reply to his mother. Why could she not understand it? In what respects did Jesus develop? What was the secret of his beautiful character?

THE BLACKBOARD.

THE BOY JESUS

WISDOM
by
STUDY

growing in
STATURE
by
EXERCISE

FAVOR
by
OBEDIENCE

Follow him.

STUDY
EXERCISE

the

BIBLE
BODY

Live for others.

—Adapted from *Illustrative Notes.*

LESSON III—January 19th, 1896.

The Ministry of John the Baptist. LUKE 3: 15-22.

(Commit to memory verses 21 and 22.)

GOLDEN TEXT: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
John 1: 29.

PROVE THAT—We should point others to Christ. John 1: 41.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 41. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?* A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal.* Nos. 23, 62, 63, 64.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 3: 1-14. *Tuesday.* The Ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 3: 15-22. *Wednesday.* A witness-bearer. John 1: 6-18. *Thursday.* Sent before. John 8: 22-30. *Friday.* John's submission to Jesus. Matt. 3: 7-17. *Saturday.* Suffering for faithfulness. Mark 6: 14-20. *Sabbath.* The Preacher and his message. Mark 1: 1-11. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. John began his ministry in A. D. 26, about 17 years after the date of the events in our last lesson. The baptism of Jesus was in January, A. D. 27, and the imprisonment of John in March, A. D. 28. John's ministry began in the Wilderness of Judea, a thinly inhabited region west of the Dead Sea. The baptism of Jesus took place at the fords of the Jordan near Jericho.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Message Proclaimed. vs. 15-19. II. The Messenger Persecuted. vs. 19, 20. III. The Messiah Pointed out. vs. 21-22.

I. THE MESSAGE PROCLAIMED. 15. And as the people were in expectation—Margin "in suspense." They were expecting the Messiah (John 1: 19-25) and "eagerly listening" for some declaration from John himself. And all men mused (margin "reasoned" or "debated") in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not—Literally, "whether, haply, he were himself, the Christ." A surprising proof of the deep impression made, by the moral strictness of the Baptist, upon the susceptible mind of the multitude. There was *some* foundation of truth in this delusion, since, by means of John, Christ himself, though invisibly, was standing at the door and knocking. The moral greatness of John is shewn in the fact, that he made no use of this delusion of the people, but hastened to withdraw within those limits which they would almost have compelled him to pass. Similar conduct was shewn by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14: 15). (Van Oostcrzee).

16. John answered, saying unto them all—He gave substantially the same answer to numerous enquirers (John 1: 19-23; Matt. 3: 11). I indeed baptize you with water—Both "I" and "water" are emphatic. This was merely a sign and could not make their hearts clean. But one mightier than I cometh—"There cometh the One that is mightier than I," a reverential mode of naming the expected-Messiah. He was mightier in spiritual power and loftier in moral dignity. The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose—"Latchet" is a diminutive of "latch" and comes from the same root as "lace." It was originally a plaited string. The sandals of the ancients were composed of a sole of leather, or

some other strong material, fastened around the ankle and between the toes by a string or thong. To put on, or take off the shoes and to carry them, was the duty of the humblest slaves (Matt. 3: 11). He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire—Rather "in the Holy Ghost and with fire." The preposition "in." (*Gr. en*) distinguishes between the mere instrumentality of the water and the fire and the *spiritual element* whereby and wherein the child of the kingdom is baptized. This baptism by the Spirit had been foretold in Isa. 44: 3; Joel 2: 28. Its first obvious fulfilment was at Pentecost (Acts 1: 5; 2: 3) and subsequent outpourings after baptism (Acts 11: 15, 16). But it is fulfilled, without visible supernatural signs, to all Christians (1 Cor. 6: 11; 12: 13). (Farrar). Both "Spirit" and "fire" denote the same divine principle, transforming and purifying. A baptism with fire is one that purifies, illumines, inflames with holy fervor and zeal (Isa. 6: 6, 7).

17. Whose fan is in his hand—The "fan" was a broad, light, wooden shovel with which the threshed grain was tossed up into the air, so that the wind might blow away the chaff and broken straw. So Christ was to winnow the good from the bad. And he will thoroughly purge his floor—"Thoroughly" is the old form of "thoroughly." The threshing-floor was an uncovered circular area on some breezy spot. The straw was trodden by oxen yoked to a sledge, the bottom of which was studded with sharp stones (Isa. 41: 15). And will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable—The mission of the coming One was one of judgment as well as of blessing. A sharp line of demarcation is drawn even in this life between the followers of Christ and the

world, but the real separation will take place at the day of judgment. The useless, the moral refuse of mankind, will be visited with a terrible and irremediable destruction, but the righteous will be received into the abode of blessedness (Ps. 1: 4; Mal. 4: 1; Jer. 15: 7; Matt. 13: 30; 1 John 2: 19). The figure may also be applied to the destruction of the evil elements in one's character (ch. 22: 31). (Farrar). All that is here said of the condemned is that they will be destroyed from before the presence of the great Husbandman with a swift and certain destruction. (Spence).

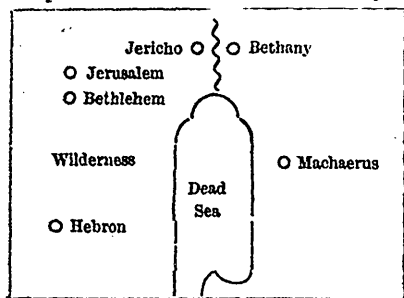
18. And many other things—Other matters besides, different in kind from those already adduced. (Meyer). These are given merely as specimens of John's trenchant, fearless denunciation of evil-doing. See John 1: 29-34; 3: 27-36. In his exhortation preached he unto the people—The word for "preached" is, literally, "evangelized," and Godet translates the verse "while addressing these and many other exhortations to the people, he announced to them the glad tidings," namely, of a Saviour near at hand. It was a gospel message.

II. THE MESSENGER PERSECUTED. 19. But Herod the tetrarch—This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. He ruled over Galilee and Peraea. His title came from the fact that he ruled over a portion ("a fourth-part," but really one-third) of his father's kingdom. This incident follows here, out of its proper chronological order, to shew further the unflinching fearlessness of John in preaching his gospel of repentance. A fuller account of John's martyrdom is given in Mark 6: 17-20 and Matt. 14: 3-5. Being reproved by him for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife—Herod had married her while her husband, and his own wife, were both living. Besides this she was his own niece (Lev. 18: 14; 20: 19), and a brother's wife (Lev. 18: 16; 20: 21). Philip was a half-brother of Herod Antipas,

in prison—Josephus tells us that his real reason for imprisoning John was the fear that he would stir up an insurrection. The Jews all regarded this as the worst of Herod's crimes and the cause of his subsequent defeat and disgrace. The prison was the fortress of Machaerus, nine miles east of the Dead Sea. Here he was beheaded about a year after this.

III. THE MESSIAH POINTED OUT. 21. Now when all the people were baptized—

This seems to imply that on 'his day Jesus was baptized last; and from the absence of any allusion to the multitude in this and the other narratives, we are almost forced to conjecture that his baptism was, in a measure, private. (Farrar). The words literally are "in the baptizing all the people." A moral connection between the baptism of Jesus and that of the multitudes is implied. He surrenders himself to the movement which, at this time, was drawing all the people to God. He is one in this with the people of God. Granted the national baptism, that of Jesus follows as a matter of course. He, too, fulfils all righteousness. (Godet). His baptism consistently follows from his incarnation and circumcision. This view does not exclude the belief that the baptism of Jesus was in some degree private. Matthew (3: 13-17) records the unwillingness of the Baptist and the memorable conversation between him and Jesus; and Mark mentions that it was He who first saw the clearing heavens and the Spirit descending. (Farrar). The place was Beth'a-ny, or Beth-ab'a-ra (*The house of the ford*), opposite Jericho. It came to pass that Jesus also being baptized—R. V. "having been baptized." "He that was formerly circumcised would now be baptized. What is baptism but an evangelical circumcision? What was circumcision but a legal baptism? One both implied and needed the other; yet the author of both will undergo both. He would be circumcised to satisfy his church that was; and baptized to sanctify his church that should be, that so, in both Testaments, he might open a way to heaven." (Hall). As man he thus confessed the sins of his brethren whom he came to redeem; he set the seal of approval upon John's ministry; and received John's witness to his Messiahship; he furnished the occasion for his Father's testimony; and was solemnly consecrated to his work of salvation. "Jesus, in submitting to the rite himself, did it with the intention of sanctifying the blessed sacrament in the future." (Spence). This is the view of the early church Fathers. But John's baptism was a rite of the old economy, not a christian sacrament. Why did John hesitate to baptize Jesus? He knew his holy and blameless character, although he did not know him to be the Messiah (John 1: 3). There may have been given to him some dim prophetic anticipation of the coming sign from heaven. Luther says 'He scents the Spirit.'" (Meyer). And praying—Luke mentions eight other occasions on which Jesus prayed (5: 16; 6: 12; 9: 18; 9: 28, 29; 22: 32; 22: 41; 23: 34; 23: 46). He also alone



who had fallen under the displeasure of his father and was excluded from the succession. He lived in retirement at Jerusalem. And for all the evils which Herod had done—(Compare Nathan, 2 Sam. 12: 7). We are told elsewhere that Herod respected his honesty and heard him gladly.

20. Added yet this above all—'to crown all,' as we would say. That he shut up John

gives us the two parables on perseverance in prayer (9: 5-13; 18: 2). **The heaven was opened**—Probably there was some supernatural appearance resembling an opening in the sky. (Schaff). What follows was an answer to the prayer of Jesus. The Spirit was now poured out upon him for his work.

22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him

"The deep blue vault was rent asunder, and the Sinless One gazed far into the realms of eternal light; and as he gazed he saw descend a ray of glory, which, dove-like, brooded above his head, and then lighted upon him." (Spence). The bodily shape assumed by the descending Spirit was that of a dove. It was certainly not a real, living dove, but in appearance and motion resembled one. The comparison is not between the mode of descent and the dove's manner of fluttering in the air, but between the dove and the descending glorious Object viewed generally. The narrative throughout emphasizes the real, objective character of the occurrence. John saw it as well as Jesus (John 1: 32), and if others were present they, doubtless, were also

spectators of the scene. The legend of the early church that, at the baptism of Jesus, a fire was kindled in Jordan, may have arisen from the popular accounts of this, as related by others then present. The dove is the emblem of peace, purity and love. Some new relation is now established between Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but the mystery is beyond us. This is his baptism by the Spirit, but it is not immersion. **And a voice came from heaven**—R. V. "out of heaven." The voice of God the Father (Ps. 2: 7; 2 Pet. 1: 7; Matt. 17: 5; John 12: 28-30). Which said, **Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased**. "I have been and still am well pleased." His pre-existence is implied. "The voice of God resounds in the ear and heart of Jesus, and reveals to him all that he is to God—the Being most tenderly beloved, beloved as a father's only son; and consequently all that he is called to be to the world—the organ of divine love to men, He whose mission it is to raise his brethren to the dignity of sons." (Godet). This is one of the passages which distinctly imply the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *We should prepare our hearts to receive Christ.* John was more than a prophet; he did not so much foretell the Messiah as point him out amongst the men of his day. Much as the nation prayed for its Deliverer it was not ready to receive him. In religion the people were mainly Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes—formalists, sceptics or mystics. The Messianic hope was essentially a political aspiration. John's work was to recall the minds of the people to the spiritual character of the Kingdom of God and the heart-conditions of citizenship in it. Those who were "baptized" with John's views, readily gathered around Jesus, but those who rejected him were the men who had failed to grasp the significance of John's mission. If Jesus is to be our Deliverer from sin we must give our hearts to him by repentance and sincerely submit ourselves to his holy law.

2. *The Holy Spirit cleanses the heart from sin.* John did not profess to do more than afford the people an opportunity of shewing by an expressive rite that they desired cleansing from the sins that they confessed. But he promised that the Coming One would administer an effectual baptism that would cleanse, quicken and inspire. The baptism with water is a sign and a pledge of the inward baptism of the Spirit. The one condition of his cleansing and life-giving power is faith in Christ. If we believe in, and give our hearts to Jesus, the Holy Spirit will cleanse us from sin. But we must really wish for this and try to overcome sin, or He can do nothing for us. Our baptism will be an empty ceremony, so far as we are concerned, unless the Holy Spirit follows it with his cleansing. Our Heavenly Father will give the Spirit to those who ask him.

3. *There must be an everlasting separation between those who believe in Christ and those who refuse to accept him as their Saviour.* Christ will be like the winnower in the open air threshing-floor, casting up the mass against the wind to separate the chaff from the wheat, and gathering the one into his garner, but setting fire to the other until it be utterly consumed. The gospel is a savor of life unto life to those who accept it, and, on the other hand, it dooms to a more dreadful destruction those who, having heard its gracious message, refuse to submit their hearts to Christ. The distinction between the two classes may not always be very clearly defined in this life, but at death, and manifestly at the judgment, he will separate the sheep from the goats. To the one he will say: "Come, ye blessed," and to the other: "Depart, ye cursed." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25: 46).

4. *We cannot escape the penalty of sin by getting angry with God or his ministers.* "If a preacher rebukes other people for their wrong-doing, commend him; he is doing a good work faithfully. If he points out your evil-doings, stop his mouth, if you can; he ought to be ashamed of himself for meddling with other people's business. That is the way that most persons look at the mission of the preacher. Only now and then there is a pew-holder who has the power to shut up a preacher as soon as he becomes too personal in his preaching; but the spirit of Herod so far has by no means died out of the community. If our practices are out of harmony with the teachings of a man of God, there are two ways of trying to put an end to the discrepancy: one

is by improving our practices, the other is by silencing the preacher. The second of these methods is usually more agreeable to us than the first, and we are glad to adopt it if we can. There is where we agree with old Herod." (Trumbull).

5. Jesus "fulfilled all righteousness" on our behalf. Matthew tells us that John hesitated to baptize Jesus, knowing who he was, but that Jesus overcame his scruples by saying: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Just because he had no sin Christ was able to "fulfil all righteousness." In this ordinance he gave his sanction to the work of John; stamped with his approval the public confession of sin by the people, and was himself consecrated to the work of which John was laying the foundation. Both in his life and in his death Christ obeyed the law on our behalf. His life of perfect obedience supplied for us the ground of merit which our first parents had forfeited, and his atoning death satisfied the claims of divine justice against us. Because Jesus died our sins are forgiven; because Jesus lived we are sons of God through him—"accepted in the Beloved."

1. John would not build up a reputation upon a false basis.
2. The humblest service for Christ is a very great honor.
3. We may make the common affairs of life speak to us of God and duty.
4. It is a great sin in those who have been baptized with water to refuse to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
5. The first and absolutely necessary condition of this baptism is repentance.
6. If we are not renewed by the Holy Spirit we cannot be saved.
7. Every true teacher of the gospel will put Christ in the foreground and warn sinners of the inevitable consequences of refusing him.
8. We should do our duty and leave the consequences to God.
9. We should not only give our hearts to Christ, but we should make a public profession of our faith.
10. To all who are Christ's brethren God is saying: "Thou art my beloved son."

BETWEEN THE LESSONS.

How old was John the Baptist when he began his ministry? Where did he at first preach? What prophecy did he fulfil? How was he clothed? What was his food? What was the effect of his preaching? What did he say to the Pharisees and Sadducees? What to the people? to the publicans? to the soldiers? How did he describe the coming of the Messiah? What is meant by baptism with fire? What parable of our Lord's resembles John's words here? In what sense did John preach "the gospel"? Why was Jesus baptized? On what other occasions did a voice come to him from heaven? Who alone seem to have heard this voice? Was John expecting to see this manifestation of God's presence? What did it tell him? What testimony to Jesus did he then bear? (John 1: 34).

THE BLACKBOARD.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

WORK
SALVATION
of
SINNERS

WITNESSES
VISION
and
VOICE

THE END.

WHEAT } is { CHAFF
GARNERED } } BURNED

"Hear ye him." —Adapted from *Illustrative Notes*.

LESSON IV—January 26th, 1896.

The Early Ministry of Jesus. LUKE 4: 14-22.

(Commit to memory verses 18 and 19).

GOLDEN TEXT: "His word was with power." Luke 4: 32.

PROVE THAT—We should go to church regularly. Heb. 10: 25.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 42. *What is the sum of the ten commandments?* A. The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and with all our neighbor as ourselves.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal.* Nos. 83, 69, 87, 38.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Early Ministry of Jesus. Luke 4: 14-22. *Tuesday.* The ministry rejected. Luke 4: 23-32. *Wednesday.* Ministry of mercy. Luke 4: 33-44. *Thursday.* Isaiah's prophecy. Isaiah 61. *Friday.* Hindered by unbelief. Mark 6: 1-6. *Saturday.* A Deliverer. Isaiah 42: 1-8. *Sabbath.* Made free. Rom. 6: 15-23. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. Immediately after his baptism Jesus was tempted in the wilderness (4: 1-13), after which he returned to Jordan and chose his first five disciples (John 1: 35-55). With these he went to Galilee where he changed water into wine at the marriage in Cana. Visiting Jerusalem shortly after, at the Passover, he expelled the traders who profaned the temple by their presence (John 2: 12-25), and was visited by Nicodemus (John 3: 1-21). He returned to Galilee through Samaria, and his interview with the woman at Jacob's well took place on this journey (John 4: 1-26). His fame had preceded him and he was cordially welcomed. At Cana he healed the son of a nobleman who lived at Capernaum, and in his progress through the cities of Galilee comes once more to the town in which he had spent his childhood. He is now entering upon the second year of his ministry, the year of his greatest popularity. About this time, John the Baptist was thrown into prison, and his work as Christ's forerunner came to a close.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Fame of Jesus. vs. 14-16. II. A Prophecy of Jesus. vs. 17-19. III. The Preaching of Jesus. vs. 20-22.

I. THE FAME OF JESUS. 14. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit unto Galilee—The phrase "the power of the Spirit" indicates a new phase in the life of the Son of Man, a change from its former tenor as striking as that which passed over the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, when new powers of thought and utterance were developed which had been latent (Rom. 15: 13). (Elicott). The Spirit which came upon him at his baptism manifests itself in full power in his mighty acts and gracious words. Galilee is viewed as the starting point and chief scene of our Lord's ministry (Acts 10: 37; Luke 23: 5). **And there went out a fame of him through all the region round about**—His words had touched men's hearts and his miracles astonished them (Matt. 4: 23-25; John 2: 23; 4: 45).

15. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all—The word "He" is emphatic. "He himself" in contrast with the rumor about him. (Farrar). His reputation had prepared the way for him. (Codet). The subject matter of his preaching was a continuation of John's message (Matt. 4: 17). The synagogue services were mainly for the purpose of instruction in the Word of God. The dawn of the day of work was bright. Wonder, admiration, glory waited on the new prophet. Soon, however, when his preaching involved a demand on man's faith and obedience beyond what they had expected, it aroused opposition, and the narrative that follows is the first stage of that antagonism. (Elicott).

16. And he came to Nazareth—The city which was the home of Jesus for nearly thirty years stands at the slope of a precipitous hill about 66 miles north of Jerusalem and 14 west of the Sea of Galilee. At this time Galilee was very populous, and Nazareth was a considerable town of probably over 10,000 inhabitants. Many commentators place the

incidents of our lesson at a later period in the ministry of our Lord. But those who have arranged this series of lessons for us take the view that they occurred at the beginning of his work in Galilee, because they afford a satisfactory explanation of his removal from Nazareth to Capernaum. They have accepted Luke's order of events in preference to that of Matthew and Mark. Some hold that there were two visits to, and rejections at, Nazareth, but (1) it is very unlikely that the same words would have been spoken and the same answer given in such exactly corresponding terms on two occasions; or (2) that Jesus would have marvelled at their unbelief after experiencing the violent treatment here narrated; and (3) the miracles mentioned by the other two evangelists do not contradict our Saviour's words as given by Luke, for they were comparatively insignificant, exciting the desire for something more marvellous. **Where he had been brought up**—Christ must have entered the familiar synagogue with the deepest emotions. The memories of his own childhood and youth, those on every hand whom he had known and who knew him from infancy, the sacred desk and ancient rolls from which he had learned to recognize his Father's voice calling him to his long-foretold work, the change of immeasurable, indeed infinite, significance which had come over him since he last took part as one of themselves in the sacred exercises, all this would fill him with the most earnest yearning over their spiritual welfare, and the most ardent desire to preach to them the acceptable year of the Lord. **And, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day**—Either his custom, of attending the synagogue on the Sabbath, or of standing up to read at the service. The first is the most natural. **And stood up for to read**—It would appear as if Jesus stood up, thus offering himself as

the reader for the day, an offer which was at once accepted. It was customary for the presiding elder to request any seemingly competent stranger to address the congregation (Acts 13: 15).

II. A PROPHECY OF JESUS. 17. **And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias**—The books of the Old Testament were on separate rolls of parchment, kept in a painted box called "the ark." The first lesson from the pentateuch had been read by some one else, and now the clerk, or assistant, who had charge of "the ark" handed to Jesus the roll from which the second lesson for the day was to be taken. Esaias is the Greek form of Isaiah. **And when he had opened the book he found the place where it was written**—Isaiah 61: 1, 2. This passage is taken from the portion of the book which some think was not written by Isaiah, but by some later prophet. Our Saviour's use of it stamps it as inspired, whoever wrote it. The immediate meaning of the prophet was the deliverance of the nation from captivity. The higher or "Messianic," meaning is unfolded in our Lord's application of the words to himself. "The meaning of this prophetic citation may be better seen, when we remember that it stands in the middle of the third great division of the book of Isaiah (chaps. 49-66), and that, viz., which comprises the prophecies of the person, office, sufferings, triumph and church of the Messiah;—and thus by implication announces the fulfillment of all that went before, in him who then addressed them." (Alford). There was a regular "lectionary," or prescribed course of lessons for every day, but the language indicates that the passage was accidentally, or intentionally a departure from the regular course. This section is now read by the Jews on the great day of atonement, but their present arrangement of lessons was not in use in our Saviour's time.

18. **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**—See verse 14 and John 3: 34; 1's. 45: 7; Isa. 11: 2; Col. 1: 19. **Because he hath anointed me**—Prophets (1 Kings 19: 16) and priests (Ex. 28: 41 & 30: 30) were consecrated by anointing with oil. Hence the expression stands for the solemn setting apart to holy duties, and the endowment with spiritual qualifications for the discharge of them (Heb. 1: 9). **To preach the gospel to the poor**—"Preach good tidings unto the meek" is our version of Isaiah. Proclaim gladness to those in captivity and distress. It includes the "poor" rich as well as those who suffer penury. All who lack what is necessary to their real happiness, and are therefore objects of compassion to a benevolent Being (Matt. 5: 3; 11: 5). Poverty becomes plenty when the joy of salvation gladdens the heart. **He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted**—(Matt. 5: 4; Rom. 8: 12). The light which the death and resurrection of Christ has thrown upon a future life cheers the dying, consoles the sorrowing, and brings heaven with its glorified ones very near to us. **To preach deliverance to**

the captives—The gospel is like the sound of Jubilee trumpets. (Lev. 25: 10). Compare John 8: 32-36 and Rom. 6: 16-18. **And recovering of sight to the blind**—We perceive the real evil of sin and our danger from it only when the gospel of Christ has touched our hearts. (1's. 119: 18; Prov. 4: 19; Acts 26: 18; Eph. 4: 18). **To set at liberty them that are bruised**—(Isa. 58: 6; Matt. 11: 28-30; Isa. 55: 1-4). Those who are crushed under the sad burdens which sin imposes.

19. **To preach the acceptable year of the Lord**—The year of jubilee was the type of the gospel dispensation. A time in which God will show his willingness to accept those who come to him through Christ. (2 Cor. 6: 2; Isa. 49: 8; Eph. 1: 6, 20). Notice that he does not finish the quotation. He does not speak of God's vengeance on his enemies, but his love and pity for the suffering.

III. THE PREACHING OF JESUS. 20. **And he closed the book and gave it again to the minister**—R. V. "the attendant." He rolled up the scroll and gave it to the officer who had charge of the sacred manuscripts. **And sat down** It was customary to sit when addressing an audience as a teacher. This was a sign that he was about to expound the passage. **And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him**—His natural and reverent manner and his impressive reading would awaken anticipations in their minds of something different from what was usually heard in that place.

21. **And he began to say unto them**—"A solemn beginning" (Bengel), indicating the calm dignity with which he made this astounding announcement. Alford and others think that it means that the following words are only the first words, or synopsis, of a lengthy discourse. It corresponds rather with the expression "He opened his mouth and said." **This day is this Scripture fulfilled**—By the fact that Jesus was now doing what it predicted. "He explained the passage, and by explaining, fulfilled it." "Our Lord most completely verified the words of the prophet, both in their literal and spiritual meaning. He preached the gospel to the poor in fortune, the poor in spirit, and the poor in religious knowledge. He healed the broken-hearted; he raised and comforted those that were oppressed with calamity, disease and sin. He gave sight to the blind; to those that sat in darkness he disclosed at once the cheerful light of day, and the more glorious light of divine truth. To the captives, to them that were bruised, he preached deliverance; he preached a doctrine which not only released from spiritual bondage those that had been led captive by their sins, but diffused throughout the earth such a spirit of mercy and humanity, that the heavy chains of personal slavery were gradually broken in most parts of the Christian world; and they, that had been for so many ages bruised by the cruel hand of pagan mas-

ters, were at length set free." (Bishop Porteus). We can hardly imagine a *sane* man, and it is impossible to conceive of a *good* man, making this statement if it were not absolutely true. That Jesus was both sane and good is beyond question. His words confirm his claims. "This passage testifies decisively that from the beginning of his ministry Jesus already had the clear and certain consciousness that he was the Messiah." (Meyer). **In your ears**—"A concrete and individualizing mode of expression," added for the sake of vividness and emphasis. Compare ch. 1: 44; 9: 44; Acts 11: 22; Jas. 5: 4.

22. And all bare him witness--Testified in his behalf. Shewed by their countenances and attention, as well as in conversation with one another, that they recognized, with admiration and wonder, the marvellous attractiveness of his manner and words. **And wondered at the words of grace** (R. V.)

—He spoke with sweetness and majesty. Compare John 7: 46; Ps. 45: 2. They wondered where he could have learned to speak like that (Matt. 13: 54; Mark 6: 2; ch. 2: 47; John 6: 42). We need not confine their commendations to his manner merely; they felt the beauty of the sentiments that he uttered. **Which proceeded out of his mouth**—Another graphic "concrete mode of expression." **And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?**—That is, these words, or the like, passed from one to the other. In Jewish synagogues it was not considered improper to make remarks upon what was said, or even to interrupt the speaker with questions and contradictions. Their words are given more at length in Matthew and Mark. "Their village beggarly pride cannot comprehend the humility of the great One." (Stier). "Who is he that he should lecture them in this fashion."

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *We should try to bring our friends to Jesus.* "The home of his childhood has a peculiar hold on a man all through his lifetime. His earliest impressions were received there, and the scenes and the people of that locality aided in his "bringing up." He cannot but wish good to that plan: he cannot but be sensitive to the opinions of its people. Going back to one's boyhood's home after a long absence, is an epoch in any man's lifetime. Well would it be if every man, at such a time, had the desire to benefit his old town's people that actuated Jesus on his return to Nazareth. Well would it be, also, if the people in every community were more ready than the people of Nazareth, to profit by the words of truth brought to them by one who was brought up among them." (Trumbull).

2. *We should attend God's house on the Sabbath day.* "Jesus had a habit of church-going. It was a good habit to have. Whoever is without this habit misses a great deal of good. Some men go to church only when there is to be a special sermon, or unusually good singing, or an anniversary exercise, or a funeral, or when they feel like going. This is not having a custom of church attendance. This is not being like Jesus. He who has a habit of church-going, has a love of church-going, which no occasional visitor at God's house can have or understand. Love of a good thing grows with the habit of doing that thing." (Trumbull).

3. *The prophets foretold about Jesus.* The testimony of Jesus was the Spirit of prophecy. From the time of the Fall the promised Seed was kept in view. Enoch prophesied of Jesus (Jude 14). Noah was preserved in order that God's promise of redemption might not be thwarted. Abraham saw the day of Christ and Jacob told of the Shiloh who was to come. How sweetly David and the other psalmists sang of Him who was the Hope of Israel, and the later prophets seem to describe his life and

death as if they saw all the scenes enacted before them in some "enchanted mirror." More and more distinct their utterances become until the place and date are definitely fixed. Jesus now could say: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled." The whole Bible speaks of Christ. He is the inspiration of every page.

4. *Jesus brings all blessings with him*—The usual interpretation of the passage read by Jesus, referred it to the state of the people on the return from the captivity, but nothing experienced by them at that time in any way came up to the glowing language of the prophecy. Their condition, as depicted in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, was often very unhappy. In the intervening centuries they endured severe oppression, and when our Saviour came they were crushed hopelessly under the Roman power. The only real interpretation of the words was the spiritual one and their meaning was realized only when the gospel of Jesus was preached. Almost all the blessings, of a temporal character, that we enjoy, are either the result of the Christian religion or are enhanced by it, while every faculty of our nature receives new life and energy from his love in our hearts.

5. *One may admire an eloquent sermon and yet have no heart for the gospel that is preached.* These people of Nazareth wondered at the gracious words of Jesus, yet they were filled with rage at the humbling truths he spake. So men reject Christ still. They are not willing to acknowledge his high claims. If he will be content with their patronizing admiration they will be pleased, but they will not surrender to him the whole life, so that his love shall be the one absorbing passion of the soul. If they would be allowed some claim on God's favor, because of their own righteousness, they would gladly accept a salvation that they felt they, in some measure, deserved; but to confess utter unworthiness and take it as a gift of sovereign grace, goes sorely against the

grain with them. So our churches are often filled with those who are there merely because taste or custom brings them, not because they hunger for Christ.

ADDED POINTS.

1. The source of efficiency in teaching.
2. Taking part in prayer-meeting.
3. Formation of church-going habits.
4. Special claim of our own church to our regular attendance.
5. Familiarity with the Bible, so as to find the place readily.

6. How the gospel blesses the poor.
7. How it binds up broken-hearts.
8. What captives it sets free.
9. What the eyes, opened by it, see.
10. From what oppressive burdens it sets free.
11. Our guilt in refusing Christ compared with that of the people of Nazareth.
12. Unappreciated good people amongst us.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS.

Where was Jesus "led by the Spirit" immediately after his baptism? Give the three temptations and Christ's answer to each? Is there any hint given that Satan intended to return to him (Matt. 1: 11)? To whom did John point out Christ? What did he call him? Who were the first five disciples? How was each one brought to Christ? Describe the first miracle of Jesus. Why did Jesus go up to Jerusalem soon after the miracle? How did he shew his indignation at the profanation of the temple? What answer did he give when challenged as to his authority to do this? Was his meaning understood then? Who visited Jesus by night at this time? Why did he come at night? Why did Jesus return to Galilee (John 4: 1)? What notable interview did he hold on his way thither? What happened to John the Baptist at this time (John 4: 43)? What miracle did Jesus work before he arrived at Nazareth (John 4: 46, 47)?

THE BLACKBOARD.

GLAD TIDINGS

FOR THE

BROKEN HEARTED.
BOUND.
BLIND.
BRUISED.

"Now is the accepted time."

OUR TEACHER'S COURSE FOR 1896,

Last year we asked our teachers to read carefully Morrison's Hand-book on "The Art of Teaching as applied to the Sabbath-school." Those who did so, guided by the masterly treatment of the topics by Principal Kirkland, will have a higher idea of their calling than ever before, and a more earnest desire to equip themselves for their work. In pursuance of the General Assembly's plan, we shall take up Redford's "Christian Evidences" for 1896. This book should be read at the rate of about six pages per week. By those who follow a plan of fifteen or twenty minutes daily reading, it can easily be mastered in six months. Those who can afford more time would do well to procure Redford's larger work, "The Christian's plea against Modern Unbelief." The whole subject will be treated in an independent manner on another page by the Rev. Prof. Ross, of Presbyterian College, Montreal, who will, however, assume that his readers have made themselves familiar with the text-book, up to the point under consideration. Whilst it cannot be expected that the majority of our Sabbath-school teachers should be able to answer all the cavils of infidelity, it will strengthen faith, and put an end to unworthy fears for "the ark of God," if all will thoroughly mark "the strong towers, walls and bulwarks" of our Zion. We stand within the impregnable fortress of divine truth, and have no reason to "apologize" for our faith.

Primary Department.

Conducted by GEORGE H. ARCHIBALD, Superintendent St. Matthew's S. S., Montreal, Que.

PRIMARY PREVIEW—FIRST QUARTER, 1896.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." Luke 12 : 8.

PLAN FOR REVIEW:—Cover a board about four feet square, with tailor's black pattern paper. In the centre make a white or gold cross, cut the words "confessing Jesus" out of bright red paper and paste the letters under the cross, or on it. As each lesson is taught add to the chart, in a circle around the cross the symbols and words for the lessons successively as you come to them, to recall the truth taught. Review this every Sunday and thus lead up to the lesson of the day. When you come to the last lesson your Review will be complete. Remember it takes three months to prepare a Review.

LESSON I—January 5th, 1896.

The Forerunner of Christ. LUKE 1 : 5-17.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" Luke 1 : 76

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Preparing for Jesus.

III. LESSON STORY: Two Sundays ago our lesson story was about the birth of the baby Jesus, and this week it is about another baby who was going to be born. This baby was born before Jesus, and though not just in the same place, it was in the same country of Palestine, in the hill country of Judea. Herod the Great was the king there, and there, lived, a man named Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth. They were both good people, who loved God and walked in his ways. They had lived together for many years, and were now getting pretty old and did not have any children. Zacharias was a priest, and when his turn came he burned incense in the temple. This incense was made of sweet smelling spices, and as it burned and the flames went up, it was a sign that the prayers of the people went up to God. Zacharias must have prayed for a son, for one day as he was burning the incense in the Holy Place, and the people were praying outside in the courts, an angel came to him and stood on the right side of the altar of incense. When Zacharias saw him he was afraid, but the angel said "fear not Zacharias for thy prayer is heard, and you shall have a son" and shall call him John. He told him too that this son would bring joy and gladness, and many would rejoice at his birth, for he was to be the forerunner of Jesus, that meant that he was to come before Jesus and tell the people who had done wrong to repent.

With wooden blocks build the temple, courts, altar of incense, etc. Have a coloured stick for Zacharias and another of a different colour for the angel. Or show chart of the temple, courts, furniture, altars, priests, robes, etc.

IV. APPLICATION. In eastern countries, when a king was coming, people were sent out before him to make the way, or roads smooth and straight and all ready before he came along.

(Make road or way and lettering as shown in cut). John was sent to prepare the way for one greater, to prepare the hearts of the people for King Jesus. Their hearts were not right in the sight of God, they had sinned them, (draw heart and write "sin" in it) and John told them that they must not want to have their sins in their hearts any more, but must be sorry

FORERUNNERS MADE
THE WAY
READY FOR THE KING
JOHN
THE FORERUNNER MADE
READY
THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS
IS MINE READY? FOR KING JESUS

for having them there, and ask God to take them all out, so that their hearts might be ready

to be filled with faith and love for his Son who was coming. (Rub out "sins" and write "ready" in heart). Jesus has come now. Are we ready and willing to do what he wants us to do? Are our hearts loving and trusting him? Is there selfishness, or pride, or anything else in these hearts that keeps them from being ready for Jesus? If there is, let us come to him, and believing that he will do it, ask him to take out anything and everything that is there, that he does not like, and make them ready for his use, ready for him to come and live in and take care of and keep and guide.

"Keep thou my way O Lord;
Myself I cannot guide;
Nor dare I trust my steps
One moment from Thy side."

LESSON II—January 12th, 1896.

The Boy Jesus. LUKE 2 : 40-52.

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

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Growing like Jesus.




III. REVIEW: What were the names of the parents of John? What was John sent to do? How was the way prepared in the east when a king was coming? How can boys and girls prepare their hearts for Jesus?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: Zacharias was struck dumb. The annunciation to Mary. Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Birth of John the Baptist. The annunciation to Joseph (Matt. 1: 18-25). The birth of Jesus. The annunciation to the shepherds. The circumcision. The presentation in the temple. The visit of the Magi. Matt. 2: 1-12. The flight into Egypt. The return to Nazareth.

V. LESSON STORY: After the return from Egypt and settling at Nazareth, we do not hear anything more about Jesus until we come to this beautiful story in our lesson to-day. From it we learn that Jesus grew strong and wise. Joseph and Mary were in the habit of going to Jerusalem every year to the feast of the passover, and when Jesus was twelve years of age they took him with them, as it was the custom for boys at that age to go with their parents. As his parents were returning home, they thought that Jesus was with some of their friends in the company, and until they had been a day's journey from Jerusalem, did not find out that he was not with them. Then they returned to Jerusalem and searched for him three days before they found him. At last they found him sitting in the midst of learned men hearing them and asking them questions. When his mother spoke to him and asked him why he had stayed behind instead of coming along home with them he said "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" On a sandmap of Palestine make a road from Nazareth to Palestine. Have a small white wooden, or cardboard cross to represent Jesus, small pieces of coloured cardboard, or sticks, for Joseph, Mary and other people, and a block, or blocks, of wood, for the temple. As you describe the journey, take these

representations along the road to the temple (which you have placed at Jerusalem). On the return journey, bring those of Joseph, Mary, and company of people back along the road till you come to the part of the story where Jesus is missed. Then take representations of Joseph and Mary back again to the temple, and after they have found Jesus, bring all back to Nazareth.

Or, on the blackboard draw a map of Palestine, draw a coloured line for the road from Nazareth to Jerusalem, with a few lines make a rough sketch of the temple, and dots along the road for the people going to the passover. Cut out small pieces of coloured paper or cardboard, for Joseph and Mary, and a white piece in the form of a cross for Jesus. As you describe the journey, pin these on the board at the appropriate places.

JESUS GREW	I WILL GROW
WISE	LIKE 
STRONG	HIM
LOVABLE	IF I
	STUDY 
	BE TEMPERATE
	KEEP HIM NEAR 

VI. APPLICATION. We have been learning about Jesus when he was a boy. Although he was God's Son he was just like other boys. He ate and drank and slept and played and enjoyed life just as other boys, but he was always a good boy. He knew God was his Father and he was always trying to do what God his Father would like him to do. In our Golden Text we learn that he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. That means that he grew wise and strong and lovable. Boys and girls wouldn't you like to grow like Jesus? You can! If you want to grow *wise* like Jesus, (write "wise" on board) while you are at school be diligent and try to learn all you can, but in all your studies do not forget the best of all studies, God's Word. Study that well, for it tells about the best kind of wisdom, that wisdom that is "more precious than rubies, and all the things thou can'st desire are not to be compared unto her." (Pin a picture of a Bible with God's word printed or written in it, on board). If you want to grow *strong* like Jesus (write "strong" on board) remember the lesson we learned not long ago about being temperate, and (write "be temperate" on board) be temperate in all things, so that our bodies may be pure and grow strong and fit to be about God our Father's business as Jesus was. If you want to grow *lovable* like Jesus (write "lovable" on board) come and give your heart to him and ask him to keep near us and fill our hearts with his love (pin a heart with a cross in it on the board), then you will want to be kind and loving to everybody, and will be in favor with God and man.

LESSON III—January 19th, 1896.

The Ministry of John the Baptist. LUKE 3: 15-22.

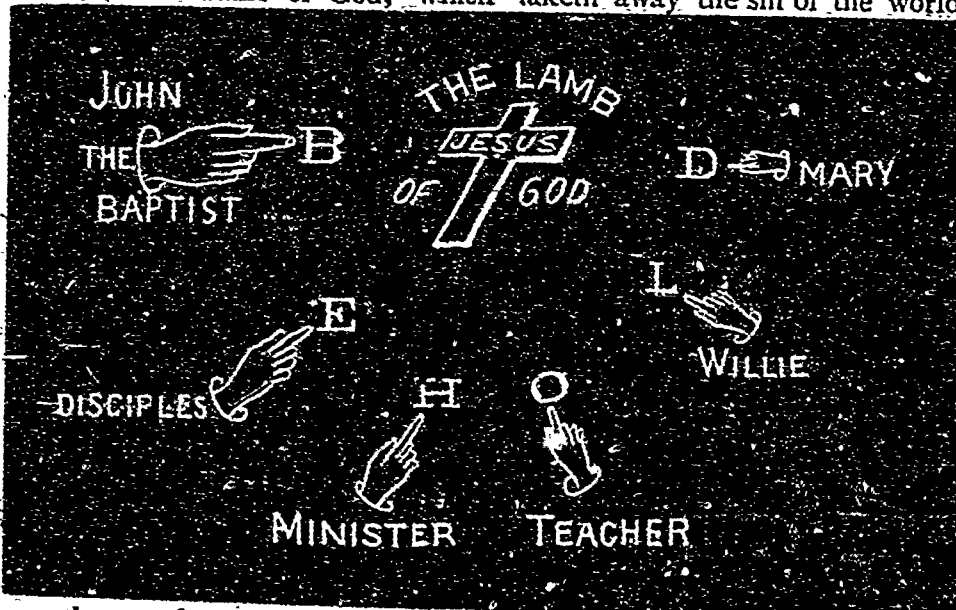
I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1: 29.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Pointing to Jesus.

III. REVIEW: What kind of a boy was Jesus? When his parents found him what did he say? What did he mean by saying, "I must be about my Father's business." How can boys and girls please their Father in heaven?

IV. LESSON STORY: Eighteen years have passed away since our last lesson. Both Jesus and John had grown up to be men, and were about thirty years of age, John being about six months older than Jesus. John the Baptist did not live, nor dress, nor eat just like other men. He went out into the wilderness and made his home there, he was dressed in coarse clothing made of camel's hair and he lived on locusts and wild honey that he found there. God gave him a special command to preach to the people because he wanted them to be sorry and give up their sins and allow Christ's love into their hearts. Those who did this were to be baptized with water. The people were so much interested in John's life and preaching and work, that they thought perhaps that he was the promised Christ, for they were expecting a king. But John would not allow them to give any honour to him, but told them that one was coming after him so great and so good that he was not worthy even to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his shoes. He meant Jesus and he was preparing for him. One day Jesus came and was baptized by John in the river Jordan. As he was praying the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

V. APPLICATION. Our central truth is "pointing to Jesus." The Golden Text is "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John said these



words and pointed to Jesus. Let us impress the truth upon the child-mind, that no matter how small we may be, we can all point to Jesus. This may be impressed deeply by the use of hands pointing to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Cut six hands out of paper or cardboard and pin them on the blackboard. The first one might be the largest, and let each succeeding one diminish in size until a

very tiny one for "Mary" is used. Get the children to hold up their little hands in the attitude

of pointing, and teach them that their lives, their actions, and their words will point better to Jesus than their hands. John the Baptist's life pointed to Jesus better than his hand did. People are watching the lives of little Christians, and they should be always pointing to Jesus.

LESSON IV—January 26th, 1896.

The Early Ministry of Jesus. LUKE 4: 14-22.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "His word was with power." Luke 4: 32.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Speaking li' Jesus.

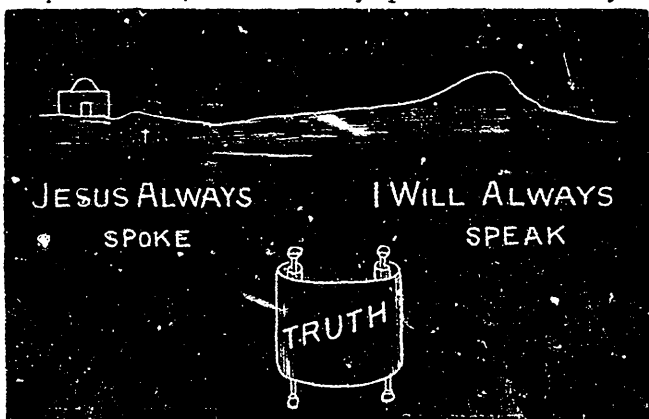
III. REVIEW: How was John the Baptist dressed? What did he eat? What shews his humility? What should my life do for others?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: About fifteen months have elapsed since our last lesson. After the baptism came the temptation. The testimony of John to Jesus, and pointing to him as the Lamb of God (John 1: 19-34). Gaining the first disciples (John 1: 35-51). The first miracle at marriage at Cana in Galilee (John 2: 1-11). Sojourn in Capernaum (John 2: 12). Jesus' first passover (John 2: 13). First cleansing of the temple (John 2: 14-16). Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus (John 3: 1-21). Jesus and his disciples tarry and baptize in Judea (John 3: 22). Further testimony of John (John 3: 23-26). Jesus' departure from Judea to Galilee (John 4: 1-3). Discourse with the woman of Samaria (John 4: 4-26). Many Samaritans believe (John 4: 39-42).

V. LESSON STORY: As Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, reports of his marvelous doings spread rapidly and likely everybody talked and wondered about him. He went into the synagogues and taught the people. Soon he went to Nazareth, the place where he had spent the days of his boyhood and young manhood. Here he was well known. He had been in the habit of going up into the synagogue when he lived there, and as was his custom went up again, when the Sabbath day came. This time the ruler of the synagogue handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah, and Jesus opened it and began to read it aloud. In the portion which he read was the prophecy that the Messiah was to come. Then he told them that he was the Messiah. When the people heard him they wondered at his gracious words and said is not this Joseph the carpenter's son? As Jesus spoke further with them they were filled with wrath and rose up to thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill that they might cast him down headlong. (Make a little sketch of the synagogue and the hill, a small white cross for Jesus, and strokes or dots for the people).

VI. APPLICATION: Jesus always spoke the truth. (Make a scroll such as Jesus read the words of truth from and print truth on it). We should always speak the truth. Because Jesus

spoke the truth about himself, the people were angry and tried to kill him, but he was not afraid and spoke it all the same. Later they made a crown of thorns (sketch crown of thorns on board), and placed it on Jesus' head, and later still they nailed him to the cross (make cross on board) for speaking the truth; but he spoke it all the same, for he knew that it was right. Sometimes people may dislike us (write dislike on board), and try to harm us (write harm on board) for speaking the truth, but all the same we must try to be brave and follow Jesus by always speaking the truth. (Erase "crown," "cross," "dislike" and "harm," leaving only on the board what is shown in cut).



Teacher Training.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

TEXT-BOOK: REDFORD'S "PRIMER OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES."

ANALYSIS, NOTES AND ADDITIONS, by Rev. Professor Ross, B. D., Presbyterian Collège, Montreal, Quebec.

INTRODUCTION.

The evidences of Christianity, that is the arguments employed in defence of it, are usually called Apologetics from the Apologies for the Christian religion addressed by some of the early fathers to the heathen emperors, when our faith was proscribed and its adherents persecuted. Apology now means an excuse for something wrong or improper, but then it meant a vindication of the beliefs and conduct of Christians against the slanders of their enemies.

It is not proposed in this study of the subject to present the arguments for the truths of natural religion, (*i. e.* the existence of God, &c.,) but only for those distinctive truths of Christianity which are common to all denominations of Christians.

A. DEFINITION OF CHRISTIANITY: The Christian religion is the system of belief and conduct originated by Jesus Christ, set forth in the Bible, always believed and generally practiced in the Christian Church, and exemplified in the character of the Christian man. Thus there are four witnesses to be examined.

B. THE CAUSES OF OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIANITY:

- I. In Early Days: (1) The State feared its political influence. (2) The rival religions, (Judaism and Classic Heathenism) were jealous of it. (3) Every grade of ancient society had some ground for hating it.
- II. At the Present Time. (1) *An evil Heart*. To acknowledge that Christianity is true necessitates confession of sin, which is intensely humiliating to many. This wrong moral bias (a) clouds the full force of the evidence, and (b) sets the will in opposition to what is clearly seen. (2) *Discontent with the present constitution of society*. Many, who desire to better the condition of the poor by social changes, think Christianity stands in the way. Their opposition to it rests on the following misconceptions: (a) That true Christianity is responsible for the abuses of our social system. (b) That Christians must necessarily defend these abuses. (c) That the sole object of Christianity is to prepare a man for another world. (d) That an outward scheme of social reform will cure the ills which spring from sin. (e) That a condition of earthly good will finally satisfy a soul made in the image of God. (3) *Dissatisfaction with the errors and corruptions of Christian Churches*. Unbelief is often a reaction from (a) Superstition, (b) Intolerance of other Christians, (c) Jealousy of the investigations of science or criticism, (d) Hard, mechanical dogmatism which is destitute of the Spirit of Christ. In all these cases the abuses of Christianity are identified with its fundamentals. (4) *Attachment to certain Theories of Science or Philosophy*. (a) A theory of God which declares that even if he does exist he can never be known. (b) A theory of the Universe which is supposed to be fatal to Christianity. (c) A theory of the nature of man which makes moral obligation and religion both impossible. (d) A theory of the origin of the Bible which reduces it to the level of other books.

C. THE PURPOSES SERVED BY THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY: (1) They remove difficulties from the minds of honest inquirers. (2) They leave the determined unbeliever without excuse. (3) They justify the believer's faith at the bar of his reason. (4) They show how Christian truth can meet every new system of error.

D. THE KIND OF EVIDENCE TO BE EXPECTED: This is determined by the nature of the subject and the limitations of the human mind.

- I. We have no right to expect: (1) A logical demonstration. That is possible only in the case of such truths as have been assumed or implied in the principles with which a discussion begins. The opposite of any truth which has been demonstrated is not only false, but absurd and impossible. This is not true of anything which depends on probable evidence. (2) Evidence which will compel the assent of every man. A demonstration would scarcely accomplish this in the case of those whose hearts are in violent revolt against the truths. (3) Evidence which will meet every objection which can be raised. In such a vast, complex subject, incidental difficulties may be left unsolved, and yet the main line of truth may be reasonably well established.

II. **We may expect:** (1) Evidence which will establish that fair degree of probability which forms the basis of action in other departments of life. (2) Evidence which on the moral side is capable of verification. We can see the effect which Christian truth has upon many a sinner. (3) Evidence which is cumulative in its effect. When the evidence is made up of many particulars all pointing to the same conclusion, the probability is very much increased and in many cases becomes an absolute certainty.

E. AN OUTLINE OF THE EVIDENCE TO BE PRESENTED;

I. **The evidence of Jesus Christ.** He is superior to all other men. 1. *In his moral character.* (1) He claims sinlessness. (2) There is nothing in the narrative to overthrow this claim. (3) He displays a perfect character in a great variety of trying circumstances. (4) The more fully his whole life is known, the greater, wiser and holier does he appear. 2. *In his personal history.* (1) He healed all manner of sickness by a word, touch, or effort of will. (2) He wrought supernatural changes in the realm of nature. (3) On three occasions he raised the dead. (4) He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. 3. *In the character of his teachings.* They are distinguished from the precepts of all other teachers by:-- (1) Originality. (2) Simplicity. (3) Earnest tenderness. (4) Comprehensiveness. (5) Adaptation to the spiritual nature of every man. (6) The revelation of a relation of the soul to God which becomes a mighty moral and spiritual force. 4. *In his influence on men.* (1) He has produced a great moral change in the world. (2) He has stamped his character on the best and holiest men. (3) His personal influence has held the Christian church together for nearly nineteen centuries and is daily extending its power. Such a character and history cannot be accounted for by any natural causes; therefore we conclude that Jesus must be divine.

II. **The evidence of the Bible and especially of the New Testament.** 1. *The office of the Scriptures to Christianity is threefold.* (1) They form a history of the facts on which Christianity is founded. (2) They contain a statement of the doctrines believed by Christians. (3) They prescribe the rules of obedience to Christ which Christians ought to follow. 2. *The claims which are made for these Scriptures.* (1) They are genuine; that is, they were written at the age to which they are assigned, and by the men, or class of men, to whom they are ascribed. (2) They are authentic; that is, they relate matters of fact as these really happened, and they have come down to us substantially as their authors composed them. (3) They are of superhuman authority. (4) Their teachings are better adapted to the spiritual wants of men than those of any other book.

III. **The evidence of the Christian church.** (1) Since the days of Christ there has always been a society believing the doctrines, practising the rites and exhibiting the character of Christian men. (2) Its members could not have learned this life from their neighbors, for Christian morality was far in advance of Pagan. Therefore it must be traced back to the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers. (3) At the end of the first century this society existed in many countries, and was everywhere in possession of the books of our present New Testament. (4) It would have been impossible, between the death of Christ and the end of the first century, to have imposed upon this society a mass of legendary matter of a character wholly different from the facts on which the church was at first founded. (5) The central fact believed in by all Christians, from the founding of the church, was the resurrection of Christ. (6) This society has repeatedly shown the vitality and authority of the truth which is its foundation, by throwing off the errors and corruption which have gathered around it, and returning to its primitive faith in Christ.

IV. **The evidence of the Christian man.** 1. *He is a better man morally than others.* (1) He has a deeper sense of the evil of sin. He shrinks not only from the act but from the thought of evil. (2) He has a higher ideal of holiness. It is not a law, but a living, perfect example. (3) He has a more powerful motive to goodness. It is not merely a sense of honor and love to a personal Redeemer. 2. *He is happier.* (1) His crushing burden of guilt is removed by the atonement. (2) He has an infinitely perfect object of affection. (3) He has a new conception of the purpose of all the trials of life. (4) His central ground of happiness is not affected by death itself. 3. *He is more useful.* (1) Christ has revealed to him the true value of man. (2) His response to Christ's love takes the form of service to man. (3) His own experience enables him to meet the deeper needs of men. 4. *All these elements of character are in proportion to the sincerity and strength of the man's Christianity.* (1) The hypocrite does not affect the argument. He is not a Christian. (2) There is room in Christianity for ceaseless progress. (3) Any man, however degraded, may become a Christian.