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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XXX.]

JANUARY, 1896.

[No 1.

What will the New Year Bring ?

I KNOW not what another year
May bring to me ;
A life all sombered o'er and drear,
Or full of cheer.

Hoping, trusting, I'll watch and wait,
To see revealed,
What's writ within the Book of fate,
Whene'er unsealed.

I may be called a cross to bear,
As yet unseen,
Or someone's bitter grief to share,—
Some anguish keen.

Whate'er my lot, I'll not repine,
For well I know,
Some angel hand is holding mine,
Where'er I go.

Oh ! blessed thought that 'mid the strife
That reigns on earth ;
There is a higher, holier life—
A second birth.

Seek then my soul this life to gain,
And thus to rise,
Above the reach of toil and pain,
Beyond the skies.

E'er clinging to the cross, I'll win,
That blessed rest ;
So pure, so sweet, so free from sin,
Supremely blest.

—Rev. H. Petty.

THIS New Year thou givest me,
Lord, I consecrate to thee,
With all its nights and days :
Fill my land with service blest,
Fill my heart with holy rest,
And fill my life with praise !

Among the many mottoes and prayers available and suitable for the New Year, what better than this beautiful stanza by Miss Havergal ? He whose life in the swiftly passing months can be summed up in the words "service," "rest," and "praise" will have a happy year in the

fullest meaning of the term. May such inestimable blessing come to every reader of these lines ! It is an old and trite saying : "How rapidly time urges his flight !—sometimes as a relentless, unsparing destroyer, but often as a swift-winged and beautiful angel ; changing, yet not taking away this world's blessings ; making our past sorrows look dim in the distance ; opening many flowers of pleasure on our way, and gradually ripening our souls for the great and glorious harvest of eternity." Of the benediction of time, Dickens has said : "Father Time is not always a hard parent, and, though he carries for none of his children, often lays his hand lightly upon those who have used him well, making them old men and women inexorably enough, but leaving their hearts and spirits young and in full vigor. With such people the grey head is but the impression of the old fellow's hand in giving them his blessing, and every wrinkle but a notch in the quiet calendar of a well-spent life." Good, quaint old Fuller prayed : "Lord, give me an hour-glass, not to be by me, but in me. Teach me the number of my days—an hour-glass to turn me—that I may apply my heart unto wisdom."

A New Leaf.

HE came to my desk with a quivering lip—
The lesson was done—
"Dear teacher, I want a new leaf," he said ;
"I have spoiled this one."
In place of the leaf so stained and blotted,
I gave him a new one all unspotted,
And into his sad eyes smiled—
"Do better now, my child."

I went to the throne with a quivering soul—
The old year was done—
"Dear Father, hast thou a new leaf for me ?
I have spoiled this one."
He took the old leaf stained and blotted,
And gave me a new one all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled—
"Do better now, my child."

—Carrie Shaw Price

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Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1896.

Torch and Banner.

WE find that we were a little too previous in our note on the new cover of the BANNER, last month. At the time of writing we had seen only the design, which was very handsome, but the execution fell short of our expectation. We have had to supersede that design by another, which we think our friends will consider a great improvement. It embodies the idea of a banner, but combines with it that of a torch, the symbol of illumination. This reminds us of Kingsley's stirring lines:

"Still the race of hero-spirits
Pass the torch from hand to hand."

The object of our Sunday-school magazine is to illumine the sacred text, to communicate all the light we can to its readers, that they may transmit it to their scholars. It is the sacred privilege of doing good, that, like mercy, "it blisseth him that gives and him that takes." We lose no light by communicating light to others. The torch burns not less brightly though it kindle a hundred other torches.

A great publishing house has as its seal a hand passing a torch to another hand, with the motto, "Let those having the light give it to others." We hope that this will be the life

motto of each one of us. If the lamp of Hope and Faith and Love has been kindled in our heart, let us not seek to hide the light, but communicate its glad illumination to all around. "No man when he hath lighted a candle putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick (or lamp-stand), that they which come in may see the light."

"Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The Lamp of Life deny?"

Methodist Magazine and Review—
Amalgamation.

By an arrangement with the Editing and Publishing Committee of the Canadian Methodist Review, that high-class bi-monthly has been amalgamated with the Methodist Magazine. The best elements of both periodicals will be united in the Methodist Magazine and Review.

In order to embrace the greater variety and wider scope of topics which this union requires, the Magazine, which has just completed its twenty-first year and forty-second volume, will be enlarged one-fifth in size, and, by closer printing, one-fourth in contents. It will still retain its popular features of superior engravings, articles of picturesque and narrative interest, biblical illustration, the "Romance of Missions," popular science, character studies, serial and short stories, and will add a Review department for the expression of the higher thought of our Church, as well as for the expression of its broadest Christian culture.

Notwithstanding this increase in size and improvement in character, the price of the Methodist Magazine and Review, where taken with either Guardian or Wesleyan, will be a reduction to \$1.75 from \$2, the price of the Methodist Magazine. Where taken singly it will continue at the same price, \$2.

The Editors and Publisher of both the periodicals now uniting make an urgent appeal for the hearty support and co-operation of the entire Church, that the Methodist Magazine and Review may be in every way a worthy exponent of the best and broadest Christian culture of Canadian Methodism. An enlarged staff of able contributors has been secured. In addition to its lighter features, a monthly review of the world's progress and of the current thought in religion, morals, science and social economics will be furnished. A specialty will be the Review of New Books. The most important works in every department of literature will receive careful examination and exposition. This will not only be a valuable guide to the book-buyer, but will keep its readers informed of the great questions which are occupying the public mind.

It should have a warm welcome in every Methodist household. A very large number of new subscribers will be needed to meet the increased cost of publication and to fulfil our ideal. Please send in your subscriptions promptly.

Each subscriber may also receive, at the nominal price of **25 cents each**, any or all of the following popular books:

Withrow's Harmony of the Gospels. New edition. Price, 50 cents.

Native Races of America. 204 pages, 60 engravings. Price, 60 cents.

China and its People. 308 pages, 93 engravings. Price, \$1.00.

A Canadian in Europe. 376 pages, 73 engravings. Price, \$1.25.

WILLIAM BRIGGS, *Publisher,*
W. H. WITHROW, *Editor,*
Of Methodist Magazine and Review.

How to Provide Good Reading for Children.

LADY SCHULTZ, the accomplished wife of ex-Governor Sir John Schultz, of Manitoba, read a paper on this subject before the National Council of Women in Toronto lately. It is one that has not received half the attention that it should. "Give me the first seven years of a child's life," said a wise divine, "and I will not feel so anxious for the future." We are glad to know that better books are superseding the childish and frivolous ones which have been too much in vogue for children.

Lady Schultz justly attaches great importance to early religious impressions—the lullaby learned by the babe in its cradle, the prayer taught at the mother's knee. She especially commends the beautiful tales of the Bible—of Joseph, of Moses, of David, of Samuel and of Daniel. Let the child's life be saturated with this sacred lore and it will prove a blessing throughout its life.

Instead of the tales and frivolous fiction on which so many young people are brought up, she commends the fairy tales of science, the wonders of the field and forest; the story of Victoria the good, and selections from the best fiction of Mulock, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens and the better school of writers. She lays also special stress on the use of selections from Wordsworth, Longfellow, Whittier, Tennyson, and the sweet singers who have wedded noble thoughts with immortal verse.

We heartily commend Lady Schultz' booklet to all interested in child education. It is published by the Bryant Press, Toronto, and may be ordered through any of our Book Rooms. It is sold at the low price of ten cents. All the profits are devoted to the reduction of the debt on Holy Trinity Church, Winnipeg.

Early Canadian Methodism.

"BARBARA HECK, a Tale of Early Methodism in Canada." By W. H. Withrow. Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis. Methodist Book-Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Pages, 238. Price, 75 cents.

Many young Canadians have a very inadequate conception of the intense and romantic interest of the story of early Methodism in this land. There is no more heroic record than that of the pioneer Methodists of Canada, who for faith and freedom forsook the older settlements of the United States on the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and laid the foundations of empire in the then northern wilderness. Prominent among the brave band was Barbara Heck, the mother of Methodism in the New World.

In the form of a story the author of this book has endeavoured to trace the adventures of the little group of Palatine emigrants who left Ireland for New York, and subsequently for Canada. A romantic interest is given to the story by tracing the adventures of the first two Methodist missionaries to Canada, both of whom fell in love with the same charming girl.

For the pictures of pioneer life, of the Quaker settlement, of the Virginia Loyalists, of the backwoods camp-meeting, of the domestic persecution of Reginald Pemberton, a young Methodist preacher, and the tragic episode of the last siege of Quebec, our readers are referred to the volume itself.

The book is brought out in excellent style by the Methodist Publishing House in Cincinnati, with four engravings, and is reprinted in Canada from duplicate plates. It will furnish attractive and instructive reading for Sunday-school and home libraries.

The Nashville *Christian Advocate* says of this book: "This beautiful story was originally published in successive numbers of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*. We are glad that Dr. Withrow has now given it to the public in book form. A more charming little volume it would be hard to find. Through it all there runs a quiet vein of deep spirituality. It is just the thing for those of our young people who desire to be thoroughly informed in regard to the mother of American Methodism."

A "Harmony" Essential.

THE lessons for the next six months deal with the life of our Lord. Each Gospel gives something which the others omit. In commenting on this fact Dr. Peloubet, in his notes on the lessons for 1895, writes, "Soms Harmony is almost essential to the best understanding of

these lessons"; and again, "If possible, have a Harmony before you while studying these lessons." He refers to that of Dr. Broadus, by Armstrong & Co.; that of Robinson, by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.—each \$1.50. Most of the other "Harmonies" are the same price. That by Dr. Withrow, issued by the Methodist Publishing House, Toronto, is only fifty cents, or one-third of this price. It is thus commended by a practical Sunday-school teacher:

"Far above Concordance, Bible Index, or Bible Dictionary, I count the Monotessaron the very best help to Bible study. Speaking for one, I may say that through recent first acquaintance with a Monotessaron, that Matchless Life has shone upon me with an entire splendour of beauty and majesty before unimagined. It has given the life and person of Christ marvellous vividness, setting facts in their due order, location, relations and proportions, while the facility it affords is a constant inspiration to fresh delightful study. Not only every Sunday-school teacher, but every Bible scholar should own one."

The first edition of one thousand was exhausted in less than six months. The second and third editions, while printed from the same plates, make it a much larger and handsomer book. Price, 50 cents. Methodist Book-Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

The Shepherd King.

"DAVID: Shepherd, Psalmist, King." By F. B. MEYER, B.A. New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. Price, 90 cents.

Our recent lessons on King David have brought the thought of the sweet singer of Israel more nearly to the world's heart than ever before. God specially trained him not only to be a ruler of Israel, but to be the Psalmist of all mankind. Leading his flock as a shepherd in one fold of Bethlehem, guiding it through the dark ravines and protecting it from the lion and bear, he learned to sing that sweet Hebrew Idyl, the 23rd Psalm, of which the world will never tire, which learned at their mother's knee or lisped by the pallid lips of the dying, has been a joy and solace to millions of mankind.

Mr. Meyer is the author of many books on Old Testament Heroes and the Christian Life series which have been read with great profit by many persons. "The character and life of David," he says, "are supremely fascinating, not only to holy souls, whose deepest thoughts have been expressed in his unrivalled psalms, but to all men, because of their humanness,

their variety, their sharply contrasted experiences, their exhibition of traits of generosity and courage which always elicit admiration.

"Sweet singer of the world; ancestor of Christ; founder of a dynasty of kings; a prophet, inspired and taught, as the Apostle Peter tells us, by the Holy Ghost; the type and precursor of him who, though his son, was also his Lord: the man after God's own heart, who 'did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.' So long as time lasts David must always enlist affection and command respect."

Teaching Methods.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL teaching is an art which is rarely a natural gift, but must be acquired, like any other art, by study, observation and practice. Few successful Sunday-school teachers are born so; most of them are self-made. A blunderer in beginning, with a firm purpose to excel, may surely learn how to teach. Most of the poor Sunday-school teaching comes of two causes: either poor Bible study, or a failure to plan the teaching of the lesson. There are five simple and natural steps that every successful Sunday-school teacher must take in every lesson taught. To leave out any one of the five steps is like taking out a link from the middle of a chain. The five steps are as follows:

FIRST STEP. GETTING READY.

1. The teacher must come *on time*, ahead of the class, in order to make ready the seating, the books, papers, etc., and to *pre-occupy* the restless and often mischievous minds of his scholars. An habitually tardy teacher is always a failure. The day's victory is to be largely won or lost in the opening moments of the session.

2. Every scholar, as he comes to his class, should receive personally from his teacher a *cordial greeting*, and be made at once to feel at home and at ease. Nothing so easily wins the average boy or girl as this genuine and hearty welcome by the teacher.

3. As far as practicable, secure to the scholars *comfortable surroundings*, such as compact seating, fresh air, proper temperature, especially sufficient nearness to teacher and other scholars that each scholar may hear and be heard distinctly.

4. Begin the lesson *without books open*, whether BANNER, leaves, Bibles or papers. Teach *eye to eye*, with no "nonconductors" intervening. Open the Bible only for reference. This one rule observed would go far toward assuring general success in teaching.

SECOND STEP: TESTING.

1. Make a double test in beginning: First, test the *attention*, the mental attitude of each scholar. Do this by simple questions upon past lessons. Secondly, test the *home study* of the lesson. Testing this is the best way to secure it, and is the only way by which the teacher may know what is already known about the lesson, and what is to be taught.

2. Continue the test of attention throughout the lesson. Whenever a scholar's attention relaxes, ply him with questions and work until you rearrest it. Do not teach a moment without the attention of all the class. It is time wasted.

3. Have something in *reserve* for dispelling weariness and listlessness, such as an apt story, object, picture, map—anything that will call back the waning attention of the scholars. A hearty minute drill in concert upon answers or statements given by the teacher will often succeed.

THIRD STEP: THE DIRECT TEACHING.

1. Stick to the *Golden Text* of the lesson as a guide as to *what* to teach. The Lesson Committee selected this text as a golden key to the true purpose and meaning of the day's lesson.

2. Plan beforehand just *what* and *how much* you shall teach, and hold to it. One point or truth well fixed is enough. Keep going over and over this point by iteration, illustration, questioning.

3. Be careful not to teach truths *too hard* to be easily understood. This is the bane of much teaching.

4. Explain the *simple text* of the lesson word by word, sentence by sentence. *Exegetical* teaching is the great need of our schools, and is the most helpful method.

5. Cultivate a *spirit of inquiry* and investigation in your scholars as far as possible. Set them to looking up parallel and marginal references, to searching the Scriptures, to seeing "whether these things are so."

FOURTH STEP: REVIEWING.

1. Convince yourself of the imperative *necessity* for this method, as by it only can you know that you have been understood, and that the truth taught is *fixed in the scholar's mind*. Teaching without reviewing is one-half of the circle.

2. Review *frequently*; and persist in it until a clear and definite knowledge, however little, is assured.

3. Begin to-day's lesson by reviewing last Sunday's, and close to-day's lesson by reviewing what you have taught.

4. Require the scholars to tell back: *in their own words* and way, however crudely, what they have learned.

FIFTH STEP: APPLYING THE LESSON.

This demands much meditation and prayer, and only the Holy Spirit can help you to do it wisely.

1. Study the lesson with respect to each of your scholars, and try to *fit it to their present needs*.

2. In order to do this you will need to study the *scholars themselves* in their home-life and environment. You should discover what are their aptitudes, their mental and moral habits, their associations, and thus be enabled to *individualize* your class.

3. Make your application in the class *impersonal*. Let it be known only to the conscience which you seek to arouse. Nothing so irritates as being singled out specially as the subject of public applications.

4. Make the application *personally*, however, when face to face with the scholar, where none but God and he can hear. He will hear you reverently, and, if you speak in the spirit of a loving friend, will cherish your words and memory long after you are gone.—*Sunday-school Magazine*.

The Future Sunday-school.

YOU will not often find in a single paragraph more sound sense than the *Advance* gives in the following. It is more than a look ahead and much more than mere speculation concerning possibilities. Read it more than once, and follow its teachings:

"The Sunday-school of the future must be marked by business system, energy and precision as distinctly as by church fervour. The Sunday-school of the future must be emphatically a Bible school, with a copy of that book in the hands of every officer, every teacher, and every scholar old enough to read it, and not a lesson-leaf or quarterly in the room; they will be left at home, where they belong. The Sunday-school of the future will be so conducted that it will be the delight of the children, a strength to the young and middle-aged; of the deepest interest to all, yet not an entertainment. Its officers will meet as a 'cabinet' at least once a month, and spend an evening studying the school and planning for it. Its teachers will only be such as are fitted for it by at least some simple course of Normal study and who diligently prepare for their work. It will have, as far as means will permit, a building or room adapted to its use—not a cellar or basement. The Sunday-school of the future must be worthy of the time and attention of the best and busiest people. To reach the standard here set will require more study, more time, more money than has ever been put into the Sunday-school before; yet the returns will be vastly more than we can now calculate."—*Baptist Superintendent*.

How to Win the Boys and Keep Them.

BY MRS. E. FARRANTS.

In the first place we must let them feel our sympathy. We must get in touch with them, and let them see that we love them and are anxious for their welfare, both temporal and spiritual. We may not always find much on the surface to love or respect, but let us look carefully, every boy has some good in him. Let us resolve to find it. Boys—and more particularly young boys—who are just starting out and trying to earn their own living have great temptations that we never think anything about. They are tempted on every side. All boys have an ambition to be or to do something; they want to appear manly amongst their associates. That is the reason so many boys indulge in the filthy habit of chewing tobacco or smoking cigarette. That is the reason so many boys use language which they would be ashamed to have their sisters or their mothers hear.

If we would win the boys and keep them, we must love them and win their respect and love in return, and, if possible, win their confidence. Whatever they may tell us in confidence we must be sure to hold it sacredly, and be always ready with the loving word of sympathy and advice. What may seem small to us, who are so much older both in years and experience, may be great trials and temptations to them.

We must always have the cheerful smile and hearty hand-shake when we meet them. Never be in such a hurry that we cannot spare one moment just to ask how they are getting along, to make them feel we have an interest in their every-day life.

Boys are very sensitive, and they will soon notice if there is coolness in our greeting or manner towards them, and will be almost sure to think and say, "Oh! they don't care anything about us!"

Let us always remember that each one of them is some mother's boy. Let us remember that they are God's boys, and He loves them. The trouble is we so often expect to find old heads on young shoulders. Religion is not to make its possessor gloomy or long-faced, or to take away any pleasures or harmless amusement, but rather a thing to make us enjoy life better, for when we have Jesus we have peace and joy here, and the promise of the life to come.

If we would attach the hearts of the boys to Jesus, we must love them—that is the great secret. We must learn of Christ; learn from His tender loving sympathy how to love. Then we must be much in prayer for them; we must

pray earnestly, and in faith, believing God's promise, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will and it shall be done." Let us go on faithfully sowing our seed, remembering that they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Then, my fellow-workers, let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Toronto, Ont.

The Old Testament and the New Must be Studied Together.

THE unity of Israel's life is a fact of no little importance in itself, and its recognition is indispensable to any large and true view of biblical history and biblical revelation. The division of the biblical department in our theological schools into the two separate departments of the Old Testament and the New Testament was probably of economic necessity. But it would be nothing less than a disaster if it should lead to the feeling on the part of the students of the Bible that the Old Testament and the New are two separate books belonging to two quite distinct periods of history, and having but a loose connection one with the other. Not only must the teacher of the Old Testament know the New Testament, and the teacher of the New Testament know the Old Testament, but both of them and every student of the Bible ought to recognize the continuity of the history, the record of which begins in the one volume and is carried forward in the other. What we need alike as students of history, and as theologians, is not a fragmentary and disconnected knowledge of the Bible, nor even a knowledge of it in all its parts, but a knowledge of it as a whole, and in its true unity.—*The Biblical World.*

A New Catechism.

A COMMITTEE appointed by the last General Conference has now in hand the preparation of the new Catechism for our Church. To this the Rev. Dr. Carman has given a great deal of time and thought, and has prepared what we think is the most logical and philosophical statement of Christian doctrine in simple language that we have seen. This Catechism will before long be ready for the press. In the meantime we omit from the *Berean Leaf* the sections of Catechism which we have heretofore given.

Sunday-school Libraries.

We have pleasure in reprinting from the *Guardian* the following judicious remarks on this subject :

"A WORD TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARIANS.

"Now that summer is passing away, and the various departments of the Church are actively preparing for what is called the 'season's work,' it may be considered timely to urge upon the librarians of our Sunday-schools the importance of replenishing their libraries and bringing them 'up to date.' Some schools there may be that are without a library, but surely none that is good to afford one. A school without a good library is much like an animal trying to economise by using only three of its four feet—there may be progress, but it is not easy, pleasant or rapid. With light, pernicious literature as abundant as it is, it becomes the duty of the Sunday-school to provide the young in its care with such reading as will be helpful in its influence on their minds, and yet sufficiently interesting to keep them from reading trashy novels.

"We strongly advise every school in the connexion to get copies of the splendid S. S. Catalogue, issued during the past year by our Toronto Book Room, and which may be had also from the Book Rooms at Montreal and Halifax. This catalogue contains in all seventy-three pages, of which fifty-five are devoted to miscellaneous books for library purposes, arranged in graded prices. Only such books were entered in this catalogue as were considered adapted for Sunday-school libraries.

"Our Book Rooms form the natural base of supplies for Methodist schools. The stock they carry is better suited to the needs of our schools than is to be found elsewhere; not only in the selection of general books from the great English publishing houses, and in the presenting of a class of books distinctly Methodist in character and teaching, but our Book Room at Toronto (admittedly first among Canadian publishers) has now a large list of books Canadian in make and matter, by Canadian authors—many of them from the pens of ministers of our own Church—and which should be on the shelves of every one of our schools. It would be well if the pastor would acquaint himself with these books and use his influence to have them placed in the library of his school.

"In the matter of prices our Book Rooms can supply at as low prices as are to be had anywhere else. Keen competition has resulted in large discounts and better terms. In cities and towns where there are book-stores, the purchase may, if the school prefer, be made through a local bookseller, but the selection should be made, as far as possible, from the

Book Room catalogue. Any bookseller can get, in a very few days, such books as he may not at the time have on his shelves.

"Our plea is for the placing of the publications of our Methodist Publishing House on the shelves of all our Methodist schools. It is a plea, not only for the support of our Publishing House, but as well, and of more importance, for the supplying to the rising youth of our Canadian Methodism of such reading as will make them not only better and more intelligent Methodists, but better and more intelligent Christian citizens as they grow up and assume the responsibilities and duties of mature years."

Gone !

ONCE more we have heard the midnight clock toll the knell of the dying year, and again the reflection has come back with augmented impressiveness: Another year is gone, gone forever! The great, many-volumed book has been sealed up for eternity. The year's history is indelibly written; every thought, word and deed stereotyped forever! Oh, if something could be left out—the deeds done in darkness; vain and malicious thoughts that we have cherished; words spoken in haste, or unadvisedly uttered! Oh, if something could be omitted! But no. "For every idle word that men speak, they shall give an account; and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, shall be brought into judgment." Gone! forever gone; irrevocably gone is the old year. Gone! its precious time, its sacred hours, its golden moments. Gone! its neglected opportunities for doing good and for self-improvement. Gone! its slighted means of grace and religious privileges. Gone! its misspent Sabbaths, its unheeded sermons, its unoffered prayers. Gone! all our sinful thoughts, idle words, unallowed deeds. Gone! Nothing can be recalled. Omnipotence itself cannot alter the past. What is written is written, and tears of sorrow cannot wash it out. What is gone is gone, and no repentance or reformation can bring it back. The past is unalterable; there is no going back to it. But, thanks be to God, while we cannot alter the past, we can, with His help, determine the character of the future.

At the beginning of this new year God opens a new volume of pure, unsullied leaves, and invites us to begin a new life. He invites us to tumble our whole library of sinful record "into the depths of the sea," promising to give us full pardon for the past, and all needed guidance and strength for the future. Shall we not do it? Let us begin the new page to-day.—*Sunday-school Magazine*.

The Sunday-school Home Department.

BY REV. T. C. MARTIN.

I MARVEL that so few schools—or rather pastors, for they must be relied upon to move in this matter—have introduced this new and very attractive phase of Sunday-school work. After six quarters' experience I see no reason why it might not be inaugurated in every one of our Church fields at once.

Later we may be able to get lieutenants to help us, but at present the minister will find it necessary for him to start it; and, besides, it will prove a very delightful "open door and effectual," not only into new families, but also into those who are just slipping out from under his touch. How easy, too, to turn the conversation from the Sunday-school lessons to the most direct and vital of topics for a pastoral call! He will unearth some very interesting facts, as I have, viz.: A deaf and dumb person is glad of this new phase of Sunday-school work; some Roman Catholic husbands terrorized their wives out of it in a short time; the sick and the aged are delighted that they can be members of the Sunday-school again; mothers with small children give it a generous welcome; so many people have trouble with their eyes or from headaches. These and many other revelations will amply repay the pastor for his calls those four weeks of the year.

The Sunday-school treasury will gain not a little from this department, scholars usually paying fifty per cent. above the cost of the department. New scholars for the school proper will be found. "Home classes" may be formed by grouping the scholars in a given locality together; and, as many churches begin as Sunday-schools, out of these "home classes" may come, one of these days, churches. So that if we were seeking to spread our Church, one of the best ways would be to push this home department out into the neglected families and all along the borders.—*Zion's Herald*.

Governing.

THEY govern best who do not seem to govern at all. It is the highest skill in governing when those governed are led to do what is desired of them without ever the thought of authority being exercised over them. Governing a class is often the teacher's most difficult problem, and yet to fail here is to fail at a vital point. All cannot govern. It is an art. As a rule, they govern best who love most. There must be a put-yourself-in-his-place feeling. Besides this, there must be patience, sympathy, tact and prudence. He cannot govern others who cannot govern himself.

Book Notices.

Elizabeth's Choice. By MRS. HAYCRAFT. London: Charles H. Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a story of English life of more than usual interest. It describes the various classes of which we know little—the knight and the squire, the castle and the cottage—with excellent cuts by Mr. Tresider.

And Peter, and Other Sermons. By REV. J. WILBUR CHAPMAN, D.D. New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company.

These sermons are not a bit sermonic. They are rather plain pulpit talks with abundance of illustration from every-day life. They are much more readable than sermon literature generally is. The book takes its title from the striking discourse on that strongly marked personality "Simon Peter."

Scripture Truths made Simple. By the REV. J. ROBINSON GREGORY. London: Charles H. Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

These stories are designed for little folk in the primary classes in our Sunday-schools. They are short and simple talks on familiar texts. Every child can understand them, and they cannot fail to instil lessons of highest importance. The numerous wood-cuts of Bible scenes and themes will interest the children and impress the sacred truths upon their mind.

With Sword and Shield. By WILLIAM J. FORSTER. London: Charles H. Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

Mr. Forster has had large experience in dealing with young people at Dr. Stephenson's Orphans' Home, and has written several successful juvenile books. They are all marked by vivacious interest and religious feeling. This story is one of a moral crusade against wrong and evil, illustrated by the famous crusades for the capture of the holy sepulchre.

Pink Roses and Other Stories for Leisure Hours. By MARGARET S. HAYCRAFT. London: Charles H. Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

With a Gladsome Mind, and Other Stories for Leisure Hours. Same author and publishers.

The short story will always hold its place in the reading of busy people. While it cannot so develop and unfold the motive or analyze feeling as the longer tale, it gives sharp kodak views of some single incident or small group of incidents. It is more difficult to write, as it is more difficult to etch a cameo or gem, than to carve a large relief or paint a large picture. Margaret Haycraft is a past mistress in this art as her numerous successful stories demonstrate. Both the books are beautifully printed and illustrated.

Practical Commentary on the International Sunday-school Lessons for 1896. Carefully edited by specialists in the various departments. By MRS. T. B. ARNOLD. Chicago, New York and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. Price, 60 cents.

A concise exposition of the Sunday-school Lessons for 1896, with questions, and the teaching of the lesson, helpful thoughts, practical applications, black-board exercises, and primary questions and teachings, also numerous maps and illustrations.

Elbert's Return. A story in which the hardships, trials and sorrows which befell an idle boy who was foolish enough to run away from a good home are faithfully set forth. By the REV. DANIEL WISE, D.D. London: Charles H. Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

The genial Dr. Wise, whose name is expressive of his character, has been familiar to three generations of Sunday-school scholars. His books have been among the most popular and instructive of their class. He knows the New Englanders well and in this story manages the Yankee dialect like a native. It is a capital picture of boy-life in New England. Mr. Robinson's pictures of little Elbert in his various adventures are very amusing.

Three Fishing Boats, and Other Talks to Children. By JOHN C. LAMBERT, B.D. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. Toronto: William Briggs. Price 50 cents.

It is a gift of highest value to be able to speak with interest and profit to children. Our Sunday-schools, especially our primary departments, have greatly developed this talent. It is one which the lady seems specially to possess, but one less common among preachers, yet is a gift which they should most earnestly covet. Too often the sermon has little to interest the young folk. The fodder is placed so high on the rack the lambs cannot reach it. In every Sabbath service there should be either a five minutes' talk to the children or something for their special interest. The talks to the children in this little book are models in their way. They have stood the test of delivery at the Sabbath services; They are preached by parables on such striking subjects as: "The Hands of Jesus," "Lions in the Way," "God's Hammer," "God's Looking-glass," "God's Searchlight," "The Lilies and the Cedar," and the like. Teachers and preachers alike may learn much from this little volume.

The Doom of the Holy City. Christ and Caesar. By LYDIA HOYT FARMER, author of "The Prince of the Flaming Star," etc. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is another of those books which, like General Lew Wallace's "Ben Hur," is designed

to furnish an historic setting for the story of the matchless life of our blessed Lord. It is in our judgment superior to most of its class. The author has entered into the spirit of the old classic times. The book is perhaps a little overlaid with archaeological learning, but gives a very vivid presentment of a life both in Rome and Jerusalem. By special permission the book is dedicated to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

The author says: "He who came to give eternal life to perishing men walked the streets of Jerusalem eighteen centuries ago, as actual an historical fact as that Nero sat on the throne of the Cæsars, or that you and I tread the earth to-day. To endeavour to make more realistic the setting of that wondrous and divine life, by painting in words the picture of that era in the world's history, is the aim of the author of this volume; with the hope that the marvellous mission of the God-man may appear with greater vividness to some soul, and that the Sun of righteousness may blaze forth as the shining centre of past, present and future history."

The Canadian Almanac.

PUNCTUAL as the arrival of December comes that office necessity, the *Canadian Almanac*. Copp, Clark Company, Limited. Price, 20 cents. It has reached its forty-ninth volume, and is better and brighter than ever. Besides the post-office and clergy lists, Canada municipal directory and statistics galore, tariff and tide tables, etc., it has two articles of special interest, one by Mr. E. M. Chadwick on "The Canadian Flag," with colored prints; and one by Dr. Bourinot on "Forms of Government throughout the World," both of which will be found interesting and valuable—the latter showing, as it does, how every province, state and country in the world is governed, and giving also its population and area, a perfect *multum in parvo*.

ANOTHER year, with all its hopes and fears,
Has sunk into the deep abyss of time;
And on the threshold of the new we stand,
Like travellers to a strange and distant
clime.
Hope, smiling, beckons, bidding us take courage;
Faith points to heaven, where God and
angels dwell,
Assuring us that all our untried future
Is known to Him who "doeth all things
well."

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

B. C. 6.] LESSON I. THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST.

[Jan. 5.]

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

Authorized Version.

Luke 1. 5-17. [Commit to memory verses 15, 16.]

[Study connection in Luke 1. 1-80.]

5 There was in the days of Her'od, the king of Ju-de'a, a certain priest named Zach-a-ri'as, of the course of A-bi'a: and his wife was of the daughters of Aa'ron, and her name was E-lis'a-beth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that E-lis'a-beth was barren; and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zach-a-ri'as saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zach-a-ri'as: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife E-lis'a-beth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Is'ra-el shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of E-li'as, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Revised Version.

5 There was in the days of Her'od, king of Ju-de'a, a certain priest named Zach-a-ri'as, of the course of A-bi'jah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aa'ron, and her name was E-lis'a-beth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that E-lis'a-beth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zach-a-ri'as was troubled when he saw *him*, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zach-a-ri'as: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife E-lis'a-beth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Is'ra-el shall he turn unto the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of E-li'jah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for *him*.

TIME.—During the week October 3-9, B. C. 6.

PLACE.—The temple in Jerusalem. **RULERS.**—Augustus, emperor at Rome; Herod the Great, king over all the region now known as Palestine, including Judea, which is here named, perhaps because it was the heart of the nation.

INTRODUCTORY.—It is not certain that Luke ever saw Jesus; but he had "a perfect understanding of all things" connected with the Gospel "from the very first," and his book is the completest of the four. No book was ever written fuller of delightful incidents, and none more profitable to the earnest student.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The Forerunner of Christ. Luke 1. 5-17.
 Th. A wondrous infancy. Luke 1. 59-66.
 W. Prophecy of greatness. Luke 1. 67-80.
 Th. Service of the altar. Exod. 30. 1-10.
 F. The Lord's messenger. Mal. 3. 1-6.
 S. Promise of Elijah. Mal. 4.
 S. Christ's testimony to John. Matt. 11. 7-14.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 313, New Canadian Hymnal.

Sing to the great Jehovah's praise!
 All praise to him belongs.

No. 342, New Canadian Hymnal.

Conducted by thy hand
Safe through another year.

No. 344, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**1. The Home, v. 5-7.**

Find out all you can about Herod the Great. Write down a list of the Herods mentioned in the Bible, and their relation to each other.

Arrange the first facts of Gospel history in chronological order: Herod's murder of the infants at Bethlehem; the recognition of Jesus by Simeon and Anna; Joseph's flight into Egypt; the vision of the star in the east; the song of Mary, the "Magnificat;" the annunciation of the birth of Jesus; Zacharias's song, the "Benedictus;" the prophecy of the birth of John; the announcement to the shepherds.

Find the account of the establishment of the "course of the priesthood," and be able to give a clear explanation of this phrase.

Find wherein the Christian era differs from the actual date of Christ's birth, and why.

Make an outline of the temple, so that each of the courts will be plainly marked; trace Zacharias's progress from the outer court past the grand altar to the "sanctuary," the only roofed building in the temple inclosure.

What is meant by the "course of Abia," to which Zacharias belonged?

What is said of the religious life of Zacharias and his wife?

What does Paul call himself in describing his condition at a time when he, too, "walked blameless in all the commandments?" (Compare Phil. 3. 6 with 1 Tim. 1. 12, 13, 15.)

2. The Vision, v. 8-12.

Describe, so far as you can, the priest's "office," or duty, during the entire day.

Why did the multitude of the people remain without?

How were they engaged?

Was anyone with Zacharias when he saw the angel?

Why should a "heavenly apparition" frighten men? (See Judg. 6. 22, 23.)

What authority have we for believing that we are always surrounded by kindly angels? (2 Kings 6. 17; Psalm 34. 7.)

3. The Promise, v. 13-17.

What were the angel's first words to Zacharias? Mention other cases in which the same words were used by angelic messengers.

Why was an emblematic name given to John?

What was the great cause for "joy and gladness" given to Zacharias by John's birth?

By whose measurement was John a great man? What connection had the prohibition of wine and strong drink with John's character?

What divine force possessed John from his birth?

What was his great work to be? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What prophet should he most resemble? What promise of a prophet was John to fulfill? (Mal. 4. 5.)

What "sign" was given to Zacharias? (Verse 20.)

When did Zacharias regain his speech? (Verses 63, 64.)

Read the song of Zacharias. (Verses 68-79.)

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The nature of true piety?
2. That God answers prayer?
3. A lesson in temperance?

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. Obedience to God's law?
2. Prayerfulness during God's worship?
3. Earnestness in God's work?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. Verses 5-7.**

5. What Herod is mentioned in the lesson? How were the priests divided?

6. What is said about the piety of Zacharias and Elisabeth?

7. What was a great trial to a Jewish home? Why was this?

2. Verses 8-12.

9. How was it decided what work a priest should do in the temple? What fell to the lot of Zacharias? When was the incense offered?

10. What did the people do while the priest ministered? For what did Zacharias pray?

11. Of what was the angel's coming a sign?

12. How long since angels had appeared in Israel? Mention some who were afraid of an angel. Tell of cases where angels tried to remove fear.

3. Verses 13-17.

15. How was John to be great? From what was he to abstain? What gives joy and strength?

17. What was John to do for Jesus? How did he resemble Elijah? When is Christ precious?

Teachings of the Lesson.

To be good is the best kind of greatness. Even good people are not free from trials. The message from heaven came to one in the Lord's house and who was worshipping. True prayer will be answered. Any child may make home happier than it would have been. Children are never too

young to receive the grace of God. God has promised a blessing to the children of good people (Isa. 44. 3).

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

[Read the Lesson Story two or three times, little Bible student, and then try if you cannot answer every one of these questions.]

Whom did God send down from heaven on an errand?

What was the name of the angel? **Gabriel.**

Can you tell what "forerunner" means?

What good people lived at Hebron?

Who was Zacharias?

To whom was his wife related?

What had they longed for? **To have a little son.**

What was Zacharias doing one day in the temple?

Who came and spoke to him?

What good news did he bring?

What did he say the child should be named?

What does "John" mean?

What did he say this child's work would be?

Why was it hard for Zacharias to believe this?

How was Zacharias punished for his lack of faith?

Something to Remember—

God thinks and knows about each little child that comes into the world.

God sent John to do a work, and he sent you to do a work.

If you let the Holy Spirit stay in your heart you, too, may be "great in the sight of the Lord."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

General Statement.

The first four verses of Luke's gospel are a formal dedication of the little book to "the most excellent Theophilus," about which person much has been guessed, for nothing is known. The phrase "most excellent," however, seems to have been a title of high rank. Whoever has read this gospel in the Greek has been startled by the sudden change of style at the end of the fourth verse. The introductory sentences are classic in the choice of words, and are balanced almost with rhythmical accuracy. But with the passage which begins our lesson the style changes, and while the words are still Greek the imagery is Hebrew. Students who know no Greek, but have some knowledge of the masterpieces in English, can get effects somewhat similar by imagining an historic pamphlet begun in the most formal and highly polished style of Addison, and abruptly changing to rugged sentences such as Carlyle wrote in *Past and Present* and *The French Revolution*. So marked are the Hebraistic traits of the passage beginning with chapter 1. 5 and ending at chapter 2. 52, and so different from the rest of the book, that a theory has arisen (now very widely adopted by Christian scholars) that Luke received the story of the incarnation direct from the Virgin Mother. It is, surely, to the story of these three chapters Luke alludes when he asserts (verse 3) that he had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first." To understand the event we are about to study, we should recall how, four hundred years or so before, Malachi (the last of a long line of Hebrew prophets) had promised in mystical language that Elijah should reappear and usher in the Messiah. Other prophetic utterances and popular legends had been woven together until it had become the confident expectation of the common people that the fiery old prophet of righteousness in Ahab's day would in literal truth come again. But four hundred years is a long time to wait, and with hope deferred the Hebrews' heart grew sick. At length, in the early autumn of the year which is now known as B. C. 6, an angel announced the birth of one who, bearing quite another name, and with a personality all his own, would nevertheless, "in the spirit and power of Elijah," fulfill Malachi's prophecy. Great in the sight of the Lord was this new prophet to be. Of holy character from infancy, he was to turn many of his nation to a genuine service of God, and prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

Verse 5. In the days of Herod. Herod the Great. Carefully distinguish him from the five other Herods mentioned in the New Testament. Three of these were his sons: (1) Herod the tetrarch (Antipas), before whom Salome danced, who slew John the Baptist, and before whom Jesus was brought as a criminal; (2) "his brother Philip" (Herod Philip I), whose wife, Herodias, deserted him to live with Herod Antipas; (3) "Philip the tetrarch" (Herod Philip II), who built Caesarea Philippi. "Herod the king" (Herod Agrippa I), who killed James, imprisoned Peter, and was

smitten by an angel of the Lord, was the grandson of Herod the Great; while "King Agrippa" (Herod Agrippa II), who said to Paul, "Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian," was his great-grandson. **King of Judea.** The Roman senate had made Herod king over what is now known as the Holy Land. He was an Idumean (Edomite), but Idumean had long before this been closely connected with Judea, and its citizens had adopted the Hebrew religion. Beginning his public life a courageous, vigorous, and resourceful young soldier, he ended it a monster of cruelty.

The events of our lesson came near the end of his life. The fact that he died early in the year that we now know as B. C. 4, was of service to modern scholars in their efforts to give probable date to the birth of Jesus. **Zacharias** means "Jehovah-remembers." Hebrews made names for their children by pressing two or three words into one. Such names were meant to be descriptive of the child, and where they failed of this they were in later life supplemented by more characteristic surnames. **The course of Abia.** All descendants of Aaron were by birth priests; but so many were they that all could not find constant service in the temple. As far back as David's time they had been arranged in "courses" to take turn in the holy service, and the members of each "course" were detailed by lot each to his special duty. **Daughters of Aaron.** Jewish priests were at liberty to marry outside of their tribe, but John was of priestly descent by both parents. This gave him a rank in society which was highly esteemed. **Elisabeth** means "God-is-my-oath."

6. Righteous before God. Scrupulous in obeying the details of the Mosaic law from the holiest of motives; at once spiritual and ritualistic. **Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.** It is said that there were six hundred and thirteen of these "commandments and ordinances." This pious couple neglected no requirement.

7. They had no child. There has always been in the Orient, and is to-day, a yearning for children and a delight in childhood intenser in degree and different in kind from anything prevalent in Christendom. This quite aside of the special Hebrew hopes of a Messiah.

8, 9. It so happened that while Zacharias served as priest in the temple (during the official term of his family, according to the custom then in vogue of having the priestly families serve successively by turn) he was chosen to offer incense in the holy place. **His lot was to burn incense.** Better, "he obtained by lot the duty of entering and offering incense." This was the most coveted of all priestly duties, and the chances of getting it were so few that probably in that age of the Hebrew Church no priest ever twice entered the holy place. Three lots were cast each day: one to select the man who should cleanse the great altar and prepare its fires, one to choose the man who should offer sacrifice and cleanse the candlestick and offer incense, and one to choose the officiating priest. **The temple of the Lord** was, in the widest sense, a series of rectangular courts inside each other, each elevated on a terrace above the court which inclosed it. All were open to the air and divided from each other by carved colonnades, while the temple proper, a magnificent gold and marble shrine, towered over the inmost and

uppermost of the terraces. The whole inclosure measured about thirty-five acres. Around the edges was a series of chambers, one of which was given to each priest as his lodging place during the week when he did duty in the temple. Approaching the central shrine from these cloisters, the priest whose "lot was to burn incense" would first pass through the court of foreigners; then, mounting some steps, that of the women; then, a few steps higher, the court of the priests; and, finally, the sanctuary itself.

10. The whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. 1. As the implication is that the worshippers were many, this was probably on the Sabbath. 2. Their prayer was silent. 3. The prayer without gave value to the incense within. 4. There was a special "time of incense;" regular morning and evening hours of prayer. 5. "When the priests stood by the incense altar," to quote Dr. Geikie, "the prayers offered in the temple courts were repeated all over the land, and in every region, however distant, to which a godly Jew had wandered."

11. An angel of the Lord. When Jesus was to come angels were sent to Zacharias, to the shepherds, to Mary, and to Joseph. It was appropriate that the advent of the Son of God should be heralded by miracles. **On the right side of the altar of incense.** This would be regarded by the Jew as a good omen.

12. Fear fell upon him. It seems strange that this good man, who kept a calm mind under Herod's bad rule, should be troubled when an angel came; but terror of the supernatural is universal.

13. Fear not. This is what God and God's angels always say. It is God's constant response to the fears of men. **Thy prayer is heard.** Possibly a special prayer for a son; possibly a special prayer for the coming of the Messiah; possibly a vague and broader prayer for the beloved nation. But whatever the elements of the prayer in form it was comprehensive in spirit, and God's answer was, as God's answers always are, bigger than the prayer.

14. Thou shalt have joy and gladness. "One, the inward experience; the other, the outward expression."—*Abbott.* All the hopes of Zacharias were to be more than fulfilled. **Many shall rejoice.** So great a blessing would be this boy's career. All good lives are sources of happiness to the world; but our attention is not often turned to the thorough and sweeping reformation wrought by John. It is doubtful whether without him as a reformer Jesus's ministry could have lasted even three years.

15. Great in the sight of the Lord. As well as by human measurements. It is the unique characteristic of Jewish history that the national

heroes were first of all great in God's sight, afterward recognized as great by the people. **Shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.** This might be translated, "Neither wine nor palm wine." It is the sweeping abstinence which was enjoined upon those who had the high and holy call of the Nazarite. It is an interesting fact that in the heart of this nation chosen by God there were certain special consecrated ones like Samson and Samuel and John, not all of them faithful in every detail of life, but all of them given over by an absolute consecration to God's work. Read the law of the Nazarite (Num. 6, 2-21). Even so great and good a man as John the Baptist would have been unfit for his mission if he had drunk intoxicating liquors, and the worst intoxicants they had in those days were light and harmless compared with our modern distilled liquors. **Filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.** Notice a similar contrast in Eph. 5. 18 and in Acts 2. 13. From his earliest boyhood he was to show tokens of his fitness for his life work.

16. Many of the children of Israel shall

he turn to the Lord their God. The profligate life of Greece and Rome had been introduced into the Holy Land by its conquerors, and Syria was always a hotbed of vice and sensuality. "The work of John," says Alford, "was a concentration of the spirit of the law."

17. Notice the Revised Version of this verse, which is far better. Shall go before him. Like the courier of the king. **In the spirit and power of Elias.** The Jews would have it that Elijah would really return to earth, and even the apostles were not quite satisfied with John (see Matt. 11. 14; 17. 10-14). The resemblance was more in character than in external aspect. **To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.** The meaning is probably, as Alford suggests, that John was to restore to the people of the day the devout disposition of their fathers. **The wisdom of the just.** The spiritual prudence which recognizes the loss which follows unrighteousness. **To make ready a people prepared for the Lord.** The people were not ready yet to receive the blessings that awaited them.

CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR R. J. COOKE, D.D.

Verse 5. In the days of Herod. St. Luke begins at the beginning. In order to clear away every doubt concerning the origin of the things which were surely believed among the Christians, it was necessary for him to go back to the birth of the forerunner of Christ. What Luke is to relate in his gospel is not legendary, originating in unknown places, out of the mist of indefinite time. Not myths, but facts, marvelous as they may be, form the narrative he writes. The events introducing the greater events he is to set forth took place at a well-known time, in the days of Herod the Great, and in a well-known place, the temple at Jerusalem. **Zacharias . . . Elisabeth.** The husband was a priest; the wife belonged to a priestly family, and bore the name of Aaron's wife (Exod. 6. 23). The priesthood was divided into twenty-four classes (1 Chron. 24. 3, 10, 19). Each of these courses or classes held the temple service for one week. The class to which Zacharias belonged was the eighth, the class of Abia, and officiated, it is thought, in the months of April and October.

6. They were both righteous. In the midst of the low moral ideals of the masses, the hypocrisy of the rulers, and the general decay of religion about them, this father and mother kept strictly the law of the God of their fathers. His commandments and the statutes of his law were their law of life. They were righteous. The religion of the Old Testament did not consist wholly in statute law. The religious life of the Old Testament, like that in the New, was grounded in faith—"The just

shall live by faith" (Hosea)—for by the law, as law, no flesh can be justified. Law is punitive, not remedial. This family is an example to Christians. The next blessing to being born of the Spirit of God is the having been born of godly parents. A good pedigree counts for much in life's struggle. In the economy of God nothing good is ever wasted.

7. They had no child. A Jewish family without a child was an anomaly in the Jewish state. To be without children was a sore calamity, a source of deep distress (1 Sam. 1. 10), for out of that family the Messiah of God, the Deliverer of Israel, could never come. Over against the righteousness of the family is the barrenness of Elisabeth. Righteousness is no insurance against trouble. This is a world to which sorrow and care and disquieting ills belong, and we are born in it and live in it under those conditions. The grace of heaven is to us and for us under those conditions, but not for the purpose of destroying their disciplinary power in the moral government of the universe. The holy ones of God are not exempted from wearing the crown of thorns, which is their glory. The blackest day this world ever saw, the day of the crucifixion, has become the most luminous. Samson's riddle, in the experience of Christians who suffer afflictions, becomes a statement of the divine law of suffering to those who endure: "Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong comes forth sweetness."

8. While he executed the priest's office.

According to the order of service, incense was offered twice a day, at the morning and evening sacrifice (Exod. 30. 7, 8). The priest who was to officiate for the day was chosen by lot from the priests of the class to which he belonged. In the providence of God the lot fell this day upon Zacharias. The time, be it observed, when he offered incense was in the morning, for the lots were cast in the morning for the day. In the service of God, whether in worship or in work, revelations of his will are more likely to come to us, for the reason that we are in the true relations and moods to receive them.

11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord. It was not a vision, but a real angelic appearance in the morning, when the senses were all aroused, and he would not attribute the appearance to momentary dreaming. The ministry of angels is a profound subject. Heaven is interested in human affairs, and in all probability the angels of God are ever busy, though for good reasons unknown to us, in all the everts of human life. At the coming of our Lord into the world, the sympathy between heaven and earth became intense, and the visible ministry of angels is more marked than ever before or since. An angel announces the birth of John the Baptist and speaks of the coming of the Messiah. The same angel appears to Mary at Nazareth; angels sing at Bethlehem, a mighty host of them. Perhaps we are never so little alone as when alone.

12. Troubled . . . fear. Weakness as a result of the consciousness of sin makes us tremble before the supernatural. But fear may arise from other conditions. Those who love God fear him with a holy fear. The gulf between the finite and the infinite is infinite. Between our holiness and God's holiness we cannot but feel that we are like the heavens, unclean in his sight. Zacharias was troubled, and feared, not knowing that a great blessing was coming upon his home. Fearful saints are the same in all ages. The prison in Egypt may lead to the throne, and the lion's den to fellowship with kings, but we know it not, and tremble in the sore trial that weights us down.

13. Thy prayer is heard. The Lord of all knows when to answer prayer. For a long time, with no result, Zacharias had prayed for a child. Now, when prayer seemed useless, "both being well stricken in years," the revelation is made that his prayer has been heard and will now be granted. It is for us to "continue in prayer," and with the same faith in which we prayed leave the time for the answer and the manner of it with him who has his own time and is limited to no manner for its fulfillment.

14. Joy and gladness. A son, "God-given," as his name John signifies, would gladden the hearts of the aged couple, not only in that they had a son, but also because that child was from

God, and for the service of God, with the blessing of God upon him. Others also would rejoice at his birth. He was a sign that heaven had broken at last the silence of four hundred years—the promise of a new day, the herald of a new revelation. No greater joy can fill a parent's heart than the gladness arising from the knowledge that his children are blessed of God and are engaged in his service.

15. For he shall be great. Not necessarily in the sight of men, but in the sight of the Lord, which is true greatness. He shall be spiritually great. In character he shall represent the strictest legal righteousness of the Old Testament. **And shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.** The life of a Nazirite shall be his life. Heaven is interested in the training of children, for whatever goes into the education of a child will come out in the man, and therefore out into society. When the training of children should begin is not left conjectural (read Judg. 13. 2-24, putting the emphasis on the right person, the mother).

Filled with the Holy Ghost. The idea that infants are too young to receive the grace of God is so opposed to everything relating to them in the Scriptures, and to the operation of the Spirit of God in the universe, whether as the originator of life in plant and animal or the producer of spiritual life in man, that the wonder is that it should ever have been seriously entertained. From the day of his birth a child, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, may be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. But there must come a time when the child shall consciously and deliberately recognize and accept the work done in him and for him by the atonement.

16, 17. The mission of John is announced. **He shall go before him.** The herald of the coming Messiah, he shall prepare the way, as declared in Mal. 3. 1. John is not Elijah, but he will perform his mission in the spirit, character, expression, and manifest purpose peculiar to Elijah, who wrote nothing, but was a trumpet blast rousing the nation to loyalty to God and reformation of religion. The manifestation of this spirit shall also be in the power of that mighty prophet. Before the Gospel can produce the ultimate results of its design in human society and in the lives of men, there must be brought about certain preparatory work, an upturning of existing conditions; the old must give way to the new. **Fathers . . . children.** The family idea looms up before us at the very beginning of the new era announced by the angel. At the bottom of society is the family. Destroy that divine institution and the whole fabric falls. Hence the mission of this reformer sent from God is to reconcile, lift up, and solidify families by proclaiming true principles of godliness that will touch the hearts of men, and thereby bring the whole nation into

vital sympathy with every part. The result will be cessation of feuds, oppressions, and corroding evils that eat out the humanity of men and render society intolerable through the selfishness and anarchy that prevail. **A people prepared for the Lord.** A people ready by repentance and reformation to receive the higher blessings which can only come on prepared soil. Future blessings depend on the use of present grace. Without true preparation there is no reason why any signal favor of God should be given us, nor could we value it if given. The Lord dwells with those who prepare to receive him, as they shall forever be with him for whom he has gone to prepare a place.

Analytical and Biblical Outline. The Coming Messenger.

I. HIS PARENTAGE.

- 1. Godly.** *Righteous before God.* v. 6. They have I seen righteous. Gen. 7. 1. To a thousand generations. Deut. 7. 9.
- 2. Upright.** *Walking... blameless.* v. 6. Sincere and without offense. Phil. 1. 10. A conscience void of offense. Acts 24. 16.
- 3. Prayerful.** *Prayer is heard.* v. 13. Praying always. Eph. 6. 18. Effectual fervent prayer. James 5. 16.

II. HIS CHARACTER.

- 1. Noble.** *Great in... the Lord.* v. 15. Not before a greater. Matt. 11. 11. A burning... light. John 5. 35.
- 2. Self-denying.** *Neither wine.* v. 15. Locusts and wild honey. Matt. 3. 4. Be not drunk with wine. Eph. 5. 18.
- 3. Spiritual.** *The Holy Ghost.* v. 15. Be filled with the Spirit. Eph. 5. 18. Ye shall receive power. Acts 1. 8.

III. HIS MISSION.

- 1. A Reformer.** *Shall he turn.* v. 16. Saying, Repent ye. Matt. 3. 2. Prepare ye. Isa. 40. 3.
- 2. A Prophet.** *Spirit... of Elias.* v. 17. A prophet... and more. Matt. 11. 9. John... a prophet. Matt. 21. 26.
- 3. A Forerunner.** *To make ready.* v. 17. My messenger. Mal. 3. 1. My messenger. Matt. 11. 10.

Thoughts for Young People. God's Announcements to Men.

1. Every new step in God's plan for the redemption of the world has been plainly announced to mankind. The first promise of a Redeemer was made in Eden. God himself told the earlier patriarchs about the coming Saviour. With this promise nearly every angelic messenger was intrusted. All the ritual of the Mosaic law was prophetic and

symbolic in its character. Not a single bell tinkled on the priest's garments, not a single detail was observed even in the sacrifice of a lamb, but it carried a divine purpose within it like a kernel. The wonder-workers of Ahab's time, like Elijah and Elisha, and the eloquent exhorters of the later kingdoms, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, were all God's messengers, each charged with a special announcement concerning the advent of Christ. And now that the hour is struck, God sends directly from his throne an angel.

2. Angels are not God's only messengers. But this was a supernatural epoch. The conflict of angels with devils seems to have then come nearer the human race than before or since.

3. Supernatural messengers strike terror into human hearts.

4. God's messengers' first words are, "Fear not." So angels said to the shepherds. So Gabriel told Zacharias. So he said to Mary. And thus has it ever been.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

O, when will the Redeemer come to Israel, Israel's long-expected Saviour, Zion's king, the world's monarch?

And when will the sound of the feet of the forerunner of the Lord be heard? When will men hear his voice, saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!" Some day, some day, O weary heart of Israel, will the feet and the voice of the forerunner be heard.

Many are watching for the sound, and among them are faithful Zacharias, priest of the Lord, and Elisabeth, his saintly wife. From some family of Israel will the forerunner come, and would that it might be the household of Zacharias and Elisabeth! That cannot be, for they are both well-stricken in years. They can only be watchers for the coming, not those making ready.

The days go by, and Zacharias is at Jerusalem. As a priest, he is serving "in the order of his course." One great, special privilege is to burn incense in the temple of the Lord at the hour of prayer.

Let us try to bring the solemn scene before us. Let the stately walls of the temple rise up in our thought, while we see the outlying courts leading on to the impressive services. We watch the great gathering of people, prostrate in prayer, bowing toward the temple.

Can you not hear the clear, penetrating tones of a bell sounding all about the temple spaces and out into the courts? How sweet its reverberations! How they still the hearts of the worshippers! It is the appointed sign for the temple's solemn service, and one of its features is the presentation of incense in the holy place by Zacharias.

There he stands before the altar of incense. It is of gold, shining bright as the glowing coals laid upon its summit. Zacharias is also before that rich and costly veil whose drooping folds hide the sacred holy of holies, that shadowy place into which the high priest alone ventures, and he can go only once a year and see that mystic and revered recess where Jehovah is supposed specially to abide.

How serious is this solemn moment in the duties of Zacharias—a mortal so near the hiding place of Jehovah, a lowly servant about to cast upon the burning coals the incense that will go up in a cloud before the presence of the Monarch of the universe!

The symbol of prayer, of the aspirations, longings, struggles of the human heart, is in that cloud of smoke rolling above the altar, hesitating, then ascending, falling, rising, striving upward! How like a curtain swaying in the wind is that fold of fragrant smoke, when suddenly the curtain parts and there issues the dazzling form of an angel!

What a fear is upon Zacharias!

He shrinks from this shining presence.

He dare not look.

He trembles, he wonders.

And then the angel speaks.

What a succession of marvels he announces!

Zacharias and Elisabeth shall have a son! Reared a Nazarite, this son shall be filled with the Holy Ghost! He shall be a preacher of wonderful power! He shall—O, does Zacharias understand?—this son shall, in the spirit and power of the great Elias, go before the Lord!

O, wonderful prophecy of the forerunner!

I see one going into the wilderness, to be alone with the rocks and the water courses, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, the burning sun by day and the cool, white stars by night.

I see that solitary one hastening out of the wilderness. I hear his solemn, imperative cry echoing in the ears of the sons of men, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

The startled crowds flock to the Jordan. They receive baptism, and one day among them appears, in those very waters, Jesus of Nazareth!

O, Zacharias, shrinking and trembling before that burning presence by the altar, while that sweet cloud of incense is hovering in the holy place, how little you can realize the meaning of the proclamation just made to you! The son of Zacharias and Elisabeth to be the forerunner of the Lord's anointed, the herald of the Son of God from the heavens!

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The wide prevalence of the custom of burning incense is one of the remarkable features of well-

nigh universal religion. Even the North American Indian esteemed the smoke of his pipe to be an acceptable species of incense. The ancient Mexicans offered incense daily in their temples, and one of the commonest relics shown in museums of the Aztecs is the incense pot in which was burnt bitumen. The ancient Egyptians offered incense in their temples, and a vast number of representations have come down to us of the sacrificial ceremony and the incense pellets in censers before the images of the gods. Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris* says they burnt incense to the sun three times a day, burning resin at sunrise, myrrh at noon, and *kuphi* at sunset. The Romans and Greeks offered early fumigations of herbs and chips of fragrant wood. The Babylonians and Chaldeans spent large moneys in these incense offerings. Herodotus says they burnt a thousand talents' weight of incense on the large altar in the temple where sat the golden image of Bel. The ancient Chinese made little use of incense, but it is common enough not only in Chinese temples now, but in Chinese houses, as a species of agreeable offering to deceased ancestors, and all the great and small gods of all sorts and names. The joss stick is common even in the Chinese parts of New York and California and other great cities where Chinese have erected joss houses.

There has come to us the very prescription of the ancient Hebrews for compounding incense after the art of the apothecary. It consisted of four aromatic ingredients, representing the diffusion of God's perfection through the universe:

1. The first was a gum that drops from the storax tree, not that of Java and Sumatra, but this gum tree grew in Syria;
2. Onycha, which abounded in the Red Sea, used for making perfumes;
3. Galbanum, a brown yellow gum from Persia, India, or Africa; and
4. Pure frankincense—chief of aromatic gums, obtained from India. The Hebrews were the only people known to temper these together with salt. This incense was in charge of one of the sixteen prefects of the temple. A part of the temple was devoted to a family whose duty it was to prepare it. It was always to be in store, and kept exclusively for the worship of Jehovah. It was forbidden on pain of death to make or use this compound as a common perfume, and it was forbidden to offer any other compound of fragrance in the temple worship. A special family was assigned the duty of preparing it (the house of Abtines). In the large temples of India a Hindu is employed specially to prepare incense by distilling flowers and obtaining oils from woods and flowers. Among the Jews the morning incense was offered when the lamps were trimmed in the holy place. The evening incense was burned in the twilight between the earlier and later evenings.

Blackboard.

BY J. T. HARTNAGEL, ESQ.



BY GEORGE W. PEASE, ESQ.

PREPARATION FOR CHRIST.

PROPHET FORETOLD:

"Call his name John."

PROPHECY SPOKEN:

"He shall be great."

PROMISE GIVEN:

"He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."

POSITION DEFINED:

"He shall go before the Lord."

PRESENT PROPHETS.

PREACHING RRACTICING REPENTANCE.
RELIGION.

BY

WORD and WORKS
PREPARING THE WAY
FOR
CHRIST.HAVE YOU DONE THIS?
YES? CONTINUE. NO? BEGIN.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

The Forerunner of Christ. Luke begins his gospel with John the Baptist, as one who was going to speak about the daylight would commence with

the dawn. For, like the dawn, he went before the Sun of Righteousness, which was shortly to arise.—*Catein.*

Verses 5 and 6. "When would you begin to educate a child?" was asked of Oliver Wendell Holmes. "A hundred years before he is born," was the answer. It is a comfort to remember that piety is hereditary as well as depravity. A company of students (a hundred and twenty in number) preparing for the ministry were talking of the mighty influence of a godly mother, and it was found that nine tenths of the company had been thus blessed.

Verses 8-12. Do you long for a revelation from God? Be sure that it will come to you in the path of service. The shepherds performing their humble duties received the vision of angels and the blessed announcement of the coming of the Christ. The disciples, after Christ's crucifixion, "go a fishing" —doing the only thing which they know how to do, the thing which needed to be done, and lo! Christ comes to them. The men who have received revelations in any department of God's world have not been the men who have said, "Come now, let us have a vision," but they have been the world's workers, to whom visions and revelations have come unexpectedly. Moses, tending the flock of Jethro, is surprised by a visit from the angel of the Lord, and sees the burning bush, and receives the message that he is the deliverer of his people.

Verses 13. *Thy prayer is heard.* God is saying to us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." "Ye are not straitened in me; ye are straitened in yourselves." Shall we, in looking back on our lives, be able to say, "I tried the power of prayer to the uttermost?" Can we write receipts under the promises in our Bibles, promises upon which we placed our finger when they were believingly pleaded in Christ's name? Are we living as much in expectation of answers to our prayers as merchants who have sent forth their ships and who expect their return cargo-laden?—*E. S. Elliot.*

Verses 14, 17. When Ibrahim Pasha proposed to visit certain places on Lebanon, the sheiks sent forth a general proclamation, somewhat in the style of Isaiah's exhortation (Isa. 3, 5), to all the inhabitants to assemble along the proposed route and prepare the way before him. The same was done in 1845 on a grand scale when the sultan visited Brusa. The stones were gathered out, crooked places straightened, and rough ones made level and smooth.—*Thomson.*

Were you ever in a European city just before the coming of a king or crown prince? Can you remember how the streets were swept and cleaned, and how the public buildings were made ready for his coming and inspection, and how the private dwellings were decorated to honor him and gain

his approval? So John's coming was the signal of preparation for the coming of the King.

The Teachers' Meeting.

I. Get the class to arrange the order in which the first eleven facts recorded in Gospel history probably occurred. The first fact was the announcement of John's birth to Zacharias; the last was Joseph's removal to Nazareth. (See Matt., chapters 1, 2; Luke, chapters 1, 2)...II. The temple and its service: (1) Herod's great building still in process; (2) The custom of casting lots; (3) Details of daily worship...III. The Jewish priesthood: (1) Origin of courses; (2) Classes or castes; to what grade Zacharias probably belonged; (3) Individual relations of priests to temple service; (4) Their places of residence...IV. Spiritual condition of Palestine: (1) Low moral grade of the masses; (2) Formalism of ecclesiastical leaders; (3) Presence of paganism throughout the land; (4) Increasing hope of "the redemption of Israel." Let the class make a word-picture: the great reverential throng in the outer courts; white-robed priests, each in his allotted station; service at the brazen altar; sound of the great gong; silent march of Zacharias and two helpers to the inner temple; the withdrawal of the two assistants; the sudden appearance of the angel. Do not waste time in description; but it is well to remember that the depth of the impression will depend largely on the clearness with which the les-

son's surroundings are apprehended... John's greatness: (1) Measured by God's standards; (2) Based on temperate habits; (3) Developed by the residence of the Holy Ghost in his heart; (4) A source of gladness to his parents; (5) A cause of general blessing... John's mission: (1) To turn his countrymen to the Lord; (2) To make the disobedient wise and just; (3) To herald the approach of the Lord; (4) To make ready for him a prepared people.

References.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK. (With connecting verses.) Ver. 5: The priestly course, 717; wives of priests, 748. Ver. 59: Naming the child, 749. Ver. 63: Writing tablets, 750.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Angel voices breathing ever,
Jesus, where'er thy children meet.
Lord, this day thy children meet.
Angel voices ever singing,
Within God's temple.

No. 2.

Lord of the worlds above,
Within thy house, O Lord our God,
Light of life, seraphic fire,
In the ark most holy,
Round the throne of God.

A. D. 9.]

LESSON II. THE BOY JESUS.

[Jan. 12.]

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

Authorized Version.

[Study whole chapter, Luke 2.]

Luke 2, 40-52. [Commit to memory verses 51, 52.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou

Revised Version.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'-sa-lem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the

42 custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy

43 Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'-sa-lem; and his

44 parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey;

and they sought for him among their kinsfolk

45 and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, seeking for

46 him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the

47 midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him

were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, Son,

why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy

thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

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

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

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

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

49 father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth; and he was subject unto them; and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

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

TIME.—The spring of A. D. 9. **PLACES.**—Nazareth, in Galilee, and Jerusalem. **RULERS.**—Augustus was still emperor at Rome, but Palestine had been broken up into small governments. Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, was now ruler of Galilee and Perea, and Coponius was Roman procurator of Judaea.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The Boy Jesus. Luke 2. 40-52.
Tu. The passover feast. Deut. 16. 1-8.
W. Youthful piety. 2 Chron. 34. 1-7.
Th. Seeking after wisdom. Prov. 4. 1-13.
F. The Father's business. John 5. 17-24.
S. The best knowledge. 2 Tim. 3. 10-17.
S. Growing in grace. 2 Peter 3. 11-18.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 261, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, happy is the child who hears
 Instruction's warning voice.

No. 374, New Canadian Hymnal.

Ye winds that once by Chebar's flood
 With heavenly breath revived the slain.

No. 273 New Canadian Hymnal.

I have heard of a Saviour's love,
 And a wonderful love it must be.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Lost in the City, v. 40-45.

How many years had passed since our last lesson?

In what city was Jesus born? (Verses 4-7.)

Who announced his birth? (Verses 9-14.)

Who first visited the child? (Verses 15-18.)

Who next welcomed Jesus? (Verses 28-32.)

What woman also gave him welcome? (Verses 36-38.)

Where was the home of Jesus at this time?

What is said of him in the GOLDEN TEXT?

How does this indicate his thorough humanity?

What divine influence rested upon him?

What is said of him in Isa. 11. 2, 3?

What benefit is it to us that Jesus Christ passed through the stage of childhood?

What journey did his parents make every year?

What did the pass-over commemorate? (Exod.

23. 15.)

Who were required to attend the feast? (Deut.

16. 16.)

At what age did Jesus first go to the feast?

When did the people set out to return home?

How many days did the feast require? (Deut.

16. 8.)

Who was forgotten and left in the city?

Where did his parents suppose Jesus to be?

When did they learn of his absence?

Where did they go to seek him?

Why was not his absence discovered sooner?

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

How long was it before Jesus was found?

In what part of the temple was he?

What was he doing? Was such conduct usual?

What character did it show in Jesus?

What did the doctors think of this pupil?

How were his parents affected when they saw him?

How did his mother address him?

What did his answer imply?

What later was Jesus's chief joy? (John 4. 34.)

How fully did his parents understand him?

Where did Jesus go with Joseph and Mary?

Where did Mary hide his words?

How did Jesus show an even development?

How was he regarded by those around him?

Practical Teachings.

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

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

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. Reverence for God's law?
2. Devotion to God's service?
3. Obedience to parents?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. Verses 40-45.**

40. Name some things said of Jesus as a child. How did he receive wisdom? Why did God help him?

41. Where were the Jews required to go three times a year? What was the passover?

42. Why was twelve years of age an important time in the life of a Jewish boy? When did Christ first visit Jerusalem?

43. How long did the passover last? Why did not his parents miss him sooner?

44. How did people travel to the feasts? How far was a day's journey?

2. Verses 46-52.

46. How long was he out of their company? Where did they find him? How was he occupied?

47. How did he surprise them?

48. Why were Joseph and Mary amazed when they found him?

49. Why did he wonder at their seeking him as they did? What interested Jesus most in Jerusalem?

51. What was Nazareth noted for? What traits of character marked Christ's home life?

52. Which is the more important, strength or wisdom? Did he retain God's favor as he grew older? Was he popular in Nazareth at this time? How may we best secure the esteem of good men?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Children should seek to be strong, to increase their stores of useful knowledge, and strive most after goodness of heart. The Christian youth will love the house of God. He will be careful in his companionships, and quite as strict when left to

himself as when closely watched. He will love the house of God and will seek instruction in the best things. He will obey, honor, and help his parents. Next to the favor of God he will esteem the love of good men.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How old was Jesus when he first went to the passover feast?

What might a Jewish boy do when he reached this age?

Where was this feast held?

What did it mean?

How far was it from Nazareth to Jerusalem?

Between seventy and eighty miles.

What did Jesus want to see?

How did he show his love for heavenly things?

What did he do in the temple?

Who wondered at his wisdom?

Who started to go back to Nazareth?

Why was not Jesus with them?

How far did they go before they missed him?

What did they then do?

Where did they find him?

What did he say he had to do?

Who was his true father? **God.**

Where did he go with them then?

How did he behave to his parents?

How do we know that God was pleased with him?

Something to Remember—

Jesus loved to hear about heavenly things. Do we?

Jesus knew that it was right to put God's work first. Do we?

As Jesus grew older he grew wiser. Do we?

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**General Statement.**

The incident we study to-day occurred about thirteen years and six months after that of our last lesson. The gospel story tells us how Zacharias was stricken dumb as a sign of the verity of Gabriel's promise; how angels were sent to Mary and to Joseph; of the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus the Christ; of the circumcision and presentation in the temple; of the visit of the shepherds and the wise men from the East; of the flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth. Great changes took place in almost every part of the world during the twelve years of Jesus's boyhood. Herod the Great had died soon after his massacre of the children of Bethlehem. When Jesus was ten years old a Roman governor, Roman soldiers, and Roman coinage were introduced into Judea. Herod's son, Herod Antipas, was now king over Galilee and Perea. The country groaned in its bondage, and thousands of hearts waited with ardent hopes for the coming of the Messiah. To follow the narrative given in these verses one must imagine the divine Child amid his Nazarene surroundings; the delightful hopes which would arise in his heart when his parents promised him this trip to Jerusalem; the long journey there, occupying three or four days or more—and probably made by crossing the Jordan near the south end of Lake Gennesaret, and slowly walking with the rest of the caravan from Nazareth through the rural towns of Perea, a region at that time rich with trees and fountains, and thickly populated; then the entry into Jerusalem; the days spent there in devout formal worship; the steady pursuit of truth by Jesus; the hurry and excitement of the return; the anxiety of the father and mother over his loss; the rapid retracing of their steps to Jerusalem, and his discovery there; and the quiet return to Nazareth, where he again "became subject unto them."

Verse 40. The child grew. "In this short statement," says Dr. Spence, "the story of twelve quiet years is told." **Waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.** "Waxed" means increased. The words "in spirit" are not found in the best of the old manuscripts. The whole verse shows that this boy learned just as other boys learned, by hard study. **The grace of God was upon him.** The divine favor. We have no reason to believe that any work of power was done or any word of teaching was spoken until Jesus had reached his thirtieth year, but during his boyhood he was already marked as gracious and godly. The brief statements of this verse are incomparably nobler than the flimsy inventions of the apocryphal gospels.

41. According to the best authorities the poverty of the common people of Palestine in Jesus's time was desperate; but their religion called them to go at stated times to Jerusalem, at necessarily great expense, and they gladly went. **His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.** All male Hebrews were required by their religious law to be present in Jerusalem at three great feasts each year: (1) The feast of the passover; (2) The feast of pentecost; (3) The feast of tabernacles. Of course changes of conditions, which dispersed millions of Jews far from Palestine, made the observance of this law impossible to many, but the crowd still gathered at the capital city, especially at the passover, and many women accompanied their husbands. The feast was joyful in character. It lasted for a week, and, as all Bible students know, commemorated the preservation of the firstborn of the Israelites on the night when the firstborn of Egypt were slain. The advantages of such great religious gatherings to the Jewish nation were many: they intensified religious feeling, conserved theology, maintained national unity, and added greatly to social progress.

42. Twelve years old. At twelve or thirteen the Jewish boy was regarded as grown up; he was permitted to go to his first passover feast at Jerusalem, and was required to learn a trade. Every stage in the life of a boy was marked out by precise Jewish customs, at his third, at his fifth, at his tenth, at his twelfth, and at his eighteenth year. **After the custom.** In the usual way; that is, by a caravan. A large number of families from Nazareth and vicinity would make the journey together for the sake of both convenience and safety.

43. When they had fulfilled the days. The feast was seven days long, but they were permitted to return after the third day. It seems probable, though it is not certain, that Jesus's parents started out for Nazareth before the close of the feast. **As they returned.** As they got ready to return. **The child Jesus.** Literally, the boy Jesus. A boy of twelve in the East is very much

further developed than one of that age with us. He had probably been by himself during much of the visit, and seems to have gravitated toward the house of God, where the great teachers of religion were. Probably the three or four days already spent in Jerusalem had been passed almost entirely in the temple courts. An endless succession of ceremony interested and drew the multitudes there. Especially must it have been attractive to the religiously inquiring mind of this boy. A worthless legend tells how Jesus started with his parents, but left the caravan and returned to Jerusalem. **Knew not of it.** They would not readily miss him, for in the caravan of Galilean pilgrims children seem to have usually traveled together. They could not easily find him, for the male population of Jerusalem at the passover season was estimated at nearly three millions.

44. In the company. In the Nazarene caravan. The caravan moved along the winding roads in various groups, and only came together in one company at the appointed halting place at nightfall. The boys and young men walk, the women and aged ones are mounted on camels and mules. Minor music with weird harmony is often made, while drums and timbrels sound without rest. There is much of innocent jest and much of what passes for mirth in the Orient as the caravan moves on. **A day's journey.** About twenty-five miles usually, but the first day the caravan did not advance more than six or eight. Superstitious monks still show a place, El-Bireh, six miles away from Jerusalem, where this caravan is said to have stopped. **Kinsfolk and acquaintance.** The members of this caravan were doubtless more or less acquainted with each other; neighbors at the outset, their frequent journeys to Jerusalem would bring them together, for a journey by caravan is almost as exclusive and inclusive as an ocean voyage. With the conditions of oriental life every detail of this narrative harmonizes.

45. When they found him not. They turned back, doubtless in much perplexity. They must leave their caravan, and when they could find their boy, return with the next one which started north. **Seeking him.** But with very slight clues; indeed, none at all. Ancient oriental cities had no street numbers and no alphabetized directories, no policeman with an appointed "beat" who might be supposed to recognize *habitués* and observe strangers. They had absolutely none of the means to which we would promptly look for help in searching for a missing child. Then, too, Jerusalem at this time was, as we have seen, overcrowded, with millions of people packed into an area less than one fourth the size of Philadelphia.

46. After three days. This is an idiom for "on the third day," for Jews reckon every fraction of a day as if it were a whole. He was probably missed on the first day, and the search filled

the second and part of the third. **In the temple.** In one of its courts. **Sitting in the midst of the doctors.** The rabbi, professional expounders of the Mosaic law, sat as a court of appeal every day from about nine to about three, while on Sabbaths and feast days they gave popular lessons on the law, sitting surrounded by their pupils on the temple terrace.

47. Astonished. Amazed, astounded. **Understanding.** Sagacity, spiritual insight. **Answers.** Young as he was, they found his answers worth their profound consideration.

48. Amazed. The boy's quiet, reverent home life had never suggested to them such presumption as they thought he showed here in discussing theology with these holy specialists. **His mother said unto him.** With tender reproach. **Sought thee sorrowing.** Better, "sought thee with aching hearts."

49. How is it that ye sought me? Why

did you not come here at once? Where else would I be? **About my Father's business.** The Revised Version makes it, probably more accurately, "In my Father's house." The Greek really gives no noun: "In my Father's —."

51. Was subject unto them. A model of submission to his parents. In Nazareth he took up his father's trade and became a carpenter, or what we would call a cabinetmaker.

52. Increased in wisdom. His beautiful development up to twelve went peacefully on, after the incidents given in this lesson, to manhood. His youth continued in a natural, normal increase of everything that is beautiful in body, mind, and soul. **In favor with God and man.** God loves purity; men love it so long as they do not feel its rebuke. It was in accordance with the deepest laws of human nature that the Nazarenes should hold the Boy "in favor" and "cast out" the Man.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 40. The child grew. The mystery of the union of God and man is impenetrable to us. The Lord Jesus was truly God; he was also truly man. As man he was subject to all the conditions of human development. He was an infant, and had infant ways and infant helplessness. He was a child, and acted as a child, and grew in size as other children. **Waxed strong in spirit.** Vigorous in body; energetic, courageous in heart. **Filled with wisdom.** "Beoming" filled, under the limitations of child nature. **The grace of God was upon him.** Although divine, yet divinity did not thrust itself from the beginning into the human consciousness and obliterate or confuse that consciousness. The two were united. Jesus came into full knowledge of his divinity as he grew in years, and thus to the human consciousness the **grace of God** came upon him from without, rather than from within. As he grew in years he grew in wisdom, and during the growth the favor of heaven rested upon him.

42. Twelve years old. He was now considered "a son of the law." For the first time he sees Jerusalem, the temple, the ceremony of the passover. His mission on earth begins to unfold to him. He becomes at this age obedient to the law, and must observe its statutes in all things. If children twelve years of age could be educated to recognize the authority of law, to know it and obey its precepts, is there not something absurd in the lazy supposition that children now are too young to be taught and expected to obey the law of Christ?

43. Fulfilled the days. Seven days the feast lasted (Exod. 12, 15, 17), and now the journey home begins. The father and mother for good reasons supposed the boy Jesus was with family relations among the festal caravans, and did not

learn otherwise till far on the way home. But Jesus **tarried behind in Jerusalem.** The scenes about the temple, the feast and its prophetic suggestions, stirred him mightily. The divinity is aroused, the house of God attracts him; he yields superior obedience to the divine impulse and tarrys in Jerusalem, and is

46. Found . . . in the temple. About the temple were halls and rooms where the doctors of the law taught their pupils—schools where discussions were held. Filled with a holy desire to know the teaching of the doctors of Israel concerning the things he had witnessed, and the spirit of their instruction, he takes his place in the circle of pupils, asking and answering questions relating to the law of God. His mind is turned toward the deep things of God veiled in the symbolism of ritualism, which his pure, unclouded apprehension pierced.

47. All that heard him. Teachers and pupils felt that no ordinary boy was among them. In the quietness of home, under the developing grace of God, the spiritual insight was quickened, the moral nature was intensified, the invisible things of God were clearly discerned and rejoiced in, and all that heard him **were astonished.** The taught becomes teacher. The minds of those about him are opened and they see something more than the letter of the law. His keen, clear **understanding** of what was taught, his penetration and quick apprehension of truth hid away in the legalisms of the teachers, were revelations to his hearers of the spiritual import of the law, the rites and ceremonies ordained in Israel. His questions probing the heart of things awakened questions in turn. From the deep well of his moral being these questions are answered, and that in such a way that the teachers of the law, able to anticipate answers and profoundly versed in the

difficulties and subtleties of the law, were astonished at the character of his answers. The spiritual things of God are apprehended only by a spiritual nature. The purer that nature the clearer is the vision of essential truth. When there is no affinity there is no understanding. Those who lack through neglect spiritual insight become victimized by the letter, and fail to understand the thought of God. Onsight belongs to the natural man; insight to the spiritual.

48. They were amazed. His parents did not know to what degree the divine power had been working in him. In the depths of his marvelous being, perhaps not fully realized to himself, his soul had been filled with divine wisdom; silent communings with the Unseen had developed his spiritual powers, unknown to his reputed father and wandering mother. **His mother said unto him.** Alford, with critical acumen, pertinently asks, "Why should his 'mother' here have spoken, and not Joseph, unless there were some more than usual reason for her being put forward rather than his reputed father?"

49. And he said unto them. The answer of Jesus is not to be construed as if he was excusing himself; rather is it to be understood as intended to call their attention to his character, to remind them of all they had known of him. **My Father's business.** The divine consciousness during the feast of the passover had come into the foreground of his human consciousness, and neither that nor the impulses of his sinless humanity could be longer repressed. Over against the word "father" spoken by his mother, he with divine consciousness of the fact puts the eternal "Father" whose son he is. Henceforth the only father Jesus ever speaks of or seems to know is his heavenly Father. He knows he is divine. That Mary and Joseph did not know this also, knowing what they did, may seem strange to us, but not so when we think how bewildering their experience with this inexplicable child must have been during these twelve years in the seclusion of their humble home. With the knowledge of his divinity comes the knowledge of his mission; he is sent on his Father's "business." His visit then to the doctors of the law was not the gratification of curiosity.

50. They understood not. It is at all times difficult to enter the recesses of child-nature. From the standpoint of the Old Testament neither Joseph nor Mary could understand the union of the Son with the Father which Jesus spoke of.

51. Was subject unto them. He respects their rights. He is continually obedient to them. Jesus sanctified every human relation. He is the one ideal example for childhood, for youth, and for manhood.

52. The history of his childhood closes, as

Olsaussen observes, with a new mention of the bodily and spiritual advancement of the child. And, as Alford beautifully says, "We must fully appreciate the words of this verse in order to think rightly of Christ. He had emptied himself of his glory; his infancy and childhood were no 'mere pretense,' but the divine personality was in him carried through these states of weakness and inexperience, and gathered round itself the ordinary accessions and experiences of the sons of men. All the time the consciousness of his mission on earth was ripening; 'the things heard of the Father' (John 15. 15) were continually imparted to him; the Spirit, which was not given by measure to him, was abiding more and more upon him, till the day when he was fully ripe for his official manifestation."

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

An Example to Youth.

- I. IN LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.
 - Found him in the temple. v. 46.
 - My soul longeth. Psalm 84. 1, 2.
 - One thing....desired. Psalm 27. 4.
- II. IN LOVE FOR GOD'S WORD.
 - Hearing....asking. v. 46.
 - Delight....in thy statutes. Psalm 119. 16.
 - Thy word was....joy. Jer. 15. 16.
- III. IN THOUGHTFULNESS.
 - Understanding and answers. v. 47.
 - Happy....findeth wisdom. Prov. 3. 13.
 - Add....knowledge. 2 Peter 1. 5.
- IV. IN LOVE FOR GOD'S WORK.
 - My Father's business. v. 49.
 - Delight to do thy will. Psalm 40. 8.
 - Work....while it is day. John 9. 4.
- V. IN OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS.
 - Was subject unto them. v. 51.
 - Obey your parents. Eph. 6. 1.
 - Hearken unto thy father. Prov. 23. 22.
- VI. IN ATTRACTIVENESS OF CHARACTER.
 - Favor with God and man. v. 52.
 - Shalt thou find favor. Prov. 3. 3, 4.
 - The beauty of the Lord. Psalm 90. 17.

Thoughts for Young People.

Lessons from Jesus's Youthful Growth.

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

2. Jesus's intellectual development is a model for us. God might have endowed him at the outset

with infinite knowledge. His increase in wisdom is a beautiful illustration of the divine purpose that the Messiah should be in very truth the Son of man, developing from the weakness and ignorance of infancy to the strength and wisdom of maturity. Your mind has been intrusted to you by the same kind God. Develop your intellect.

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

Lesson Word-Pictures.

And this is Jerusalem, Jerusalem the city of great kings, of David and Solomon, the city in which is the temple of the greatest of kings, Jehovah. Yes, Jerusalem is all about the boy Jesus coming to his first passover; and with what keen interest his enthusiastic boy nature welcomes everything, examines it intently, and longs to get out of it as much as possible! There are the walls of the city, so rugged and strong, the towers, the stout gates, the winding streets, the Roman soldiers, the teachers of the law, the priests, the temple, its great altar of sacrifice, the singers, the stately temple with those recesses of the holy place and holy of holies he cannot enter.

And this season, too, of passover deeply interests him, his first at Jerusalem. He watches the people coming in throngs from every quarter to the city gates, and then the passover feast at Jerusalem and the temple services at this solemn season affect him powerfully.

It is all over at last, and the tides of people surging into Jerusalem surge out again. Those three from a Nazareth home—Joseph, Mary, and Jesus—must be thinking of their return. Jesus is not with his mother and Joseph when they begin their journey, but they think he is in the long train filing northward, and that he will surely turn up among his kindred and friends. Joseph and Mary leave the strong gates behind them, and though Jesus does not appear, still at the end of the first day's journey, as they halt for the night, they think they will surely see the boy.

The sun goes down. The evening shadows lengthen. The halt for rest is made, but where is Jesus? Nowhere to be seen! It is an anxious night for Joseph and Mary, but in the morning they purpose to return to Jerusalem. It is good to have the sun rise and the day begin, that they may start to find Jesus. They go back, looking sharply to right and left as they move on. They near the city again.

Doubtless they inquire concerning Jesus. Does the keeper of the gate know anything about a missing boy, and, indeed, has he seen one?

He shakes his head.

He has seen too many boys to remember any one in particular.

The two faithful souls go about the streets. Has anyone seen anything of a boy, a boy of twelve, a boy with a bright, strong face, the boy Jesus of Nazareth?

More headshakes.

Three days Joseph and Mary are making inquiries.

Doubtless they visit the temple courts in good season; they go again. They anxiously look about. What is that crowd ahead? People earnestly discuss something. Joseph and Mary get nearer. No sign of a boy inside that crowd to be seen! I can imagine that Mary wanted to look more sharply, even into the circle; and pressing forward what does she hear, and what does Joseph hear?

Why, it is a boy's voice, and cannot Mary see the long locks that at home curl about her boy's face? O, it is Jesus! Joseph, do you not see? Yes, it is Jesus, aged twelve; and look at the grave doctors of the law discussing various subjects with him! He is a listener and a questioner. He astonishes everybody.

But Mary must speak to him.

Joseph, too, wishes to reach him.

Jesus is called aside.

Mary says, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

How strange his answer: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

His Father's business?

Yes, his Father, everywhere, in the temple, in the city, in all Judea and the world throughout the universe, yet nigh at hand, and close about a boy's heart! Jesus feels the strange impulse of sonship. How could Joseph and Mary appreciate all this?

Jesus goes with them, and together they return to Nazareth.

This strange boy grows up to manhood. Everybody loves him, everybody admires his bright intellect, and yet who can understand his strange sayings? His mother lays them away in memory's storehouse and turns the key in the door.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

When a Hebrew boy was three years old the custom was to do what was prescribed in Num. 15. 38: "Bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, . . . and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue." The purpose was to furnish an object lesson to the child. It was a symbol. It was that they, seeing the "blue ribbon" and tas-

seled garment, might "remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them." Even grown-up people were to "make fringes upon the four quarters of their vesture." When the boy was five years old he began to learn texts and whole chapters of the Hebrew Bible. These were written on scrolls, and it was much like a child now learning the Beatitudes, the twenty-third Psalm, fourteenth chapter of John, etc. The Hebrew boy committed to memory the one hundred and fourteenth, the one hundred and eighteenth, and the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalms that he might later on take part in the singing of these at the great festivals like the passover. He was not now, however, admitted to take part in the Hallel festivals. Between the ages of five and thirteen he was called "a son of the law." At thirteen, or one day after he was twelve years of age, he became a "son of the precepts," was admitted to the passover ceremonies, and became by ceremony "purified." He also put on the phylacteries, which were worn at the recital of daily prayers. His purification would be somewhat analogous to confirmation.

A modern writer gives the following account of the modern custom among Jews, as he witnessed it in one instance: "A few days ago I attended a very interesting service in a Jewish synagogue. A boy just twelve years old was brought by his father to be admitted as a member of the synagogue; there were present the parents of the boy, his brothers and sisters, his friends, and some few strangers. After several ceremonies had been performed, the priest read a portion of the law in Hebrew; the boy then stepped forward to the desk near the platform, near the center of the building, and read from the roll of parchment, in a clear, distinct voice, a short psalm. A pause ensued, and then the old man addressed the boy a few brief sentences, telling him he had attained to years of discretion, and knew the difference between right and wrong; a great responsibility rested on him; that it was his duty to follow the good and shun the evil; that it became him to show that the instruction he had received had not been given in vain; that he must diligently practice that which he knew to be right; to be obedient to his parents, kind and affectionate to his brothers and sisters, charitable to those who needed his help, and faithful to the religion in which he had been instructed. Then, placing his hand on his head, he prayed earnestly that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob would bless the lad and would preserve him from danger and from sin, and make him a wise and good man, if he should be spared to enjoy length of days; or, if his life should be short, that he might be admitted to the presence of God in heaven."

The Talmud was learned from the living teacher, hence in Christ's day a chamber of the temple was

set apart as a kind of free school, open to all. Here the famous doctors of the law sat in "Moses' seat." The older students sat on a low bench, the younger ones on the ground, literally "at the feet" of the teacher. Paul must have begun this study very early, according to custom, as he says he sat "at the feet" of Gamaliel. The freest intercourse was allowed between all the students, even to the youngest, and the teacher. Any of them could ask questions or state opinions, for, after all, it was a school of opinions. There was nothing, therefore, unusual or unseemly that Jesus at twelve should have been found in the temple (verse 46), "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions."

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 40 and 52. The grace of God in which we are to grow is not like those fruits which while immature are bitter, and only sweet when fully ripe; it is rather like the bud of a flower, beautiful in its beginnings, fairer at every degree of expansion, and when wholly open surrounded with fragrance. The growth of grace in the heart may be compared to the process of polishing metals. First, you have a dark, opaque substance neither possessing nor reflecting light. Presently, as the polisher plies his work, you will see here and there a spark darting out, then a strong light, till by and by it gives a perfect image.

Verses 41-49. Even as there is one hemisphere of the moon's surface on which, in its entirety, no human eye has ever gazed, while at the same time the moon's changes of position enable us to conjecture its general character, so there is one large portion of our Lord's life respecting which there is no full record; yet such glimpses are, as it were, given to us of its outer edge that from these we are able to understand the whole. Again, when the moon is in crescent, a few bright points are visible through the telescope upon its unilluminated part; those bright points are mountain peaks so lofty that they catch the sunlight. One such point of splendor and majesty is revealed to us in the otherwise unknown region of Christ's youthful years, and gives an insight into all his life—his visit to the temple.—*Canon Farrar.*

Verse 49. I think we may safely assume that when Christ came for the first time to the feast which commemorated the great deliverance of his nation, the boy was already conscious of a voice within calling him to the work to which the God of his fathers had called Moses and Samuel and David and Elijah. Amidst all the pomp of the great festival, he found the chosen people weighed down by a more degrading bondage than had ever befallen them. He saw the beautiful temple for the first time, and, in strange contrast, the eager traffic, the huge slaughtering of beasts with all the brutal accompaniments, and everywhere a longing

and expectation of a Deliverer. Then he must have questioned whether he was not the one upon whom the supreme task must be laid. For a moment all human ties would shrink back, and when recalled by his mother's question, his dreamy answer, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's courts, about his business?" seems less abrupt.—*Thomas Hughes.*

Versé 51. There was once a pious, godly bishop who had often earnestly prayed that God would manifest to him what Jesus had done in his youth. Once the bishop had a dream to this effect: He seemed in his sleep to see a carpenter working at his trade, and beside him a little boy who was gathering up chips. Then came in a maiden who called them both to come to the meal, and set porridge before them. Let this be what it may, a true history or a fable, I none the less believe that Christ in his childhood and youth looked and acted like other children, yet without sin, in fashion like a man.—*Luther.*

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned.
How precious is the book divine.
Grace, 'tis a charming sound.
O God, my youth is thine.
Growing up for Jesus.

No. 2.

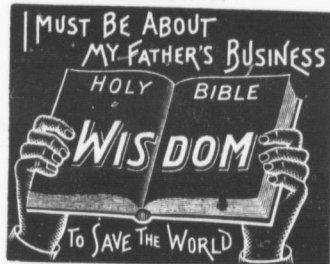
How sweet the place of prayer.
Heavenly Father, send thy blessing.
What glory gilds the sacred page.
Learning of Jesus.
Look up, look up to Jesus.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Make sketch-map of Palestine. Let the teachers trace the journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem.... Brief word-pictures of scenes of the journey, and probable characteristics of the caravan.... Make clear the occasion of this visit; what this feast stood for; who ordinarily participated in it; how it was celebrated; studies of the "doctors," etc.... The customs connected with a "son of the law".... This lesson might be effectively studied in four scenes: (1) The caravan; (2) The festal day; (3) The departure; (4) Discovery of Jesus in the temple.... Lessons from the growth of Jesus. See "Thoughts for Young People." Every youth should grow as he grew, in stature, in wisdom, strength of spirit, general favor, and the grace of God. Emphasize this. At no period of his life was he more really an exemplar than when he thus combined scrupulous attention to his heavenly Father's business with subjection to his parents.... The accounts of Jewish child-life in Farrar, Eidersheim, and Stappfer should be read if possible.... Spend no time on doubtful questions, such as whether Jesus intentionally stayed behind....

Make plain how easily a boy might stray away from his parents in such a city at such a time without blame attachable to either.... A good opportunity to impress the duty of obedience to parents.

Blackboard.



**THE BOY JESUS
OUR EXAMPLE**

IN
GOD'S SERVICE,
TRUTH SEEKING,

ABOVE ALL IN

OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS.

"Do... and do likewise."

THE BOY JESUS

GROWING IN

WISDOM	STATURE	FAVOR
BY	BY	BY
STUDY.	EXERCISE.	OBEEDIENCE.

FOLLOW HIM.

**STUDY THE BOOK.
EXERCISE THE BODY.**

LIVE THE TRUTH.

References.

FREEMAN. (Including connecting verses.) Ver. 12: Swaddling clothes, manger, 751. Ver. 25: The "consolation," 752. Ver. 44: Caravans, 69; a day's journey, 315. Ver. 44, 45: The first day's journey, 758. Ver. 46: The scribes, 648; the temple, 704; doctors and disciples, 754.

A. D. 27 or 28.] LESSON III. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. [Jan. 19.
GOLDEN TEXT. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! John 1. 29.

Authorized Version.

Luke 3. 15-22. [*Commit to memory verses 21, 22.*]

[Read Luke 3. 1-38. Compare also Malachi, chapter 3.]

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

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

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

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for He-ro'di-as his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Revised Version.

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

16 whether haply he were the Christ; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you

17 with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

18 With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people;

19 but Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for He-ro'di-as his brother's wife, and for all

20 the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

TIME.—Jesus was baptized in January, A. D. 27. John was imprisoned in March, A. D. 28.

PLACES.—Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, probably near the Bethabara fords, five miles north-east of Jericho. Herod's palace was in Tiberias, on the sea of Galilee. John was imprisoned in Macharus, a fortress nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea.

RULERS.—Tiberius, emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea. Herod Antipas is still the tetrarch of Galilee.

CONNECTING LINKS.—At least eighteen years passed between the last lesson and this. Jesus was then twelve years of age; now he was a grown man about thirty. His cousin, whom at that time he probably had not seen, had been trained in the wild desert, and now suddenly presented himself in rough and startling guise as a great reformer. People went out to hear John by the thousand. His fame spread to the very ends of the land, and Jews and Gentiles alike were terrified by his sermons, and tried to live better lives after hearing him.

HOME READINGS.

M. The Ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 3. 1-14.

Th. The ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 3. 15-22.

W. A witness-bearer. John 1. 6-18.

Th. Sent before. John 3. 23-30.

F. John's submission to Jesus. Matt. 3. 7-17.

S. Suffering for faithfulness. Mark 6. 14-20.

S. The preacher and his message. Mark 1. 1-11.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 62, New Canadian Hymnal.

I was once far away from the Saviour.

No. 67, New Canadian Hymnal.

Not all the blood of beasts.

No. 72, New Canadian Hymnal.

Arise, my soul, arise.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

I. The Baptist, v. 15-20.

What was the burden of John's teaching? (Verse 3.)

What did he demand of the people? (Verse 8.)

What three classes asked about duty? (Verses 10, 12, 14.)

What query had the people about John?

What question was asked him, and by whom? (John 1. 19.)

What did John say about himself?

What about One who was to come?

How would the coming One baptize?

To what does "fire" here allude?

What sort of fan is referred to in verse 17?

How do oriental farmers "purge" their "floors"?

What did John say about chaff and wheat?

About what else did he discourse?

What ruler did John rebuke?

What was the rebuke? (Mark 6. 17, 18.)

What did Herod the tetrarch do to John?

What was the character of this Herod?

What relation did he bear to Herod the Great?

About how old was John now?

Amid what surroundings had his youth been spent?

What fate befell John? (Mark 6. 21-28.)

What prophecy was fulfilled in John's ministry? (Mal. 3. 1.)

2. The Beloved Son, v. 21, 22.

By whom was Jesus baptized? (Matt. 3. 13.)

How was Jesus engaged when he was baptized?

What strange sight was seen?

What was heard, and from whence?

What words were uttered?

On what other occasion were these words uttered? (Luke 9. 35.)

What did the Baptist say about the beloved Son? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What was the age of Jesus at his baptism? (Verse 23.)

Practical Teachings.

1. The holiest mortal is infinitely below God. Let us, in our studies of the life of Christ, never forget that he whom Jesus declared to be the greatest born of woman was not worthy to unloose the latchet of the shoes of Jesus.

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

3. Herod's imprisonment of John is paralleled by the instinctive action of every bad man. If he cannot put the preacher in prison who calls attention to his vice, he puts his conscience in prison. He seeks to avoid guilt by forgetting sin.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That all should repent of sin?
2. That not all people will be saved?
3. That Jesus is the Son of God?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Verses 15-20.

15. What were the crowds who heard John expecting?

16. What did John answer them? Why did he

make Christ so great and himself so small? When people were baptized by John what did they mean by that act? What were latches? Whose work was it to loose them? How would Jesus baptize people? When did the Holy Spirit come? What does he do for us?

17. What was an Eastern fan? Tell what John meant by the wheat, the garner, and the chaff. How are wicked people like chaff?

19. What Herod did John offend? Why was John cast into prison? Where was this prison? In what ways was this a great sin? Is it wise to be angry with those who tell us the truth about ourselves?

2. Verses 21, 22.

21. Name some reasons why Jesus was baptized. What was Jesus doing before the Spirit descended? How many times does Luke tell us about Jesus praying? What testimony was borne to Jesus at his baptism?

22. What is the dove an emblem of? What voice was heard at Christ's baptism? On how many other occasions was this voice heard? Name them. May we know when we please God?

Teachings of the Lesson.

We should not accept the praise due to another. Teachers cannot save their pupils, but only point them to Christ. The Holy Spirit comes in answer to prayer. If you repent and are forgiven, Jesus will gather you as wheat. If we love Jesus we should obey him by being baptized and publicly professing him. God will own those who are his. The baptism of the Holy Spirit will take away our sins, make our hearts warm with love, and fill our souls with new life. For this we must ask. (See Luke 11. 13.)

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How long did Jesus stay in Nazareth after his visit to the temple?

At what trade did he work?

How do we know that he lived a right life?

How old was he now?

Who began preaching near the Jordan at this time?

Did many go to hear him?

Who was the preacher?

What do you know about his birth?

What did he preach about?

What did many people do?

Who went to hear John preach?

What did he do like the others?

Had he any sins to confess?

Why, then, was he baptized?

Why did God send a sign?

What rested upon him?

What did the voice from heaven say?

Something to Remember.

As the Holy Spirit came to Jesus, so will he come to you if you ask him.

The Holy Spirit will make your heart clean and keep it clean.

Which do you want to be, wheat or chaff? You may choose.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**General Statement.**

Eighteen years have passed since our last lesson, and thirty-one or two since Lesson I. These years have brought many changes to Palestine. Galilee, however, continues under the rule of Herod Antipas, and nearly all of Jesus's life was lived under the civil administration of Antipas and of Pilate, the procurator of Judea. An intense longing for moral relief pervaded Palestine, and was felt far beyond its bounds. The people who sat in darkness were searching for light, when suddenly John's voice was heard. We should thoroughly understand the stormy background against which the rugged figure of this "greatest born of women" stands out in bold relief. Public and personal depravity, oppression of the poor, subservience to a despotic foreign power, a formal and hypocritical hierarchy, all combined to make the common people eager to hear and attend to his words. Brought up in the wilderness, he became an ascetic, dressed like a barbarian, and lived with utmost simplicity. His rhetorical figures were homely, taken from the coarse, simple life in which he had been trained. The thousands flocked to hear him—people of every class. He condoned no vice, feared no authority, taught no new doctrine. "Live justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God," was his message to high and low. When in Herod's presence he softened no tone, but denounced his luxurious vice. As a consequence (in March, A. D. 28), John was put into prison, and eventually murdered. The most remarkable day in John's life was that on which was revealed to him "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Verse 15. The people were in expectation. In expectation of the coming of the Messiah. Not only the Jews, but Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, and men in the far East thrilled with this strange feeling, and now that a reformer, radically different in character and methods from any priest or scribe whom they had ever heard, came to the front, it was a very natural supposition that he was the Christ.

16. John answered. A deputation had come from the Sanhedrin to ascertain his claims (John 1. 19-28). The answer was to these men. **I indeed baptize you with water.** He cleansed them by a simple ceremony and symbol, but their evil hearts required much more than symbols and ceremonies. His work was symbolical and by water; the Messiah's work must be real and in spirit. **One mightier than I cometh.** "Mightier to effect what my baptism is powerless to produce." **The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.** Or, as we might say, "I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals, to loose his shoes, to button his gaiters. In spiritual power I am as far beneath him as in social standing a bootblack is beneath a prince." **He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.** John could lead his fellows to repent and to long for and struggle after a change of heart, but the Christ was to change their hearts. **And with fire.** The emblem of purification. The story of Isa. 6. 6, 7 is a beautiful illustration of this.

17. Whose fan is in his hand. Not a fan in our sense—a great wooden fork rather, with which the farmer threw up the threshed grain against the wind so that the light particles of chaff

might be blown away before the grain fell back to the earth. Christ was to winnow the people, and very wonderfully he did it. **He will thoroughly purge his floor.** Truly cleanse it. **The wheat.** The good; those who love goodness. **The chaff.** The worthless ones. **Burn with fire unquenchable.** "Unquenchable" means that cannot be put out. Set the dry chaff on fire, and the work of the flame will be so swift it cannot be arrested. The word seems simply to symbolize final and utter destruction.

18. Many other things in his exhortation preached he. He discusses all "live issues." His was applied Christianity. He told the soldiers, the publicans, the beggars, and the king himself with equal directness what it was their duty to do.

19, 20. And this state of things went on for a year and more. The incident narrated in these two verses occurred thirteen months after the baptism of our Lord, which is reported in the following two. **Herod the tetrarch.** "Tetrarch" means "ruler of a fourth part," and Herod's principality was one fourth of the older province of Syria. He had now reigned about thirty years. His government extended over Galilee and Perea. **Herodias his brother Philip's wife.** Our note on verse 5 of Lesson I identifies this "brother Philip" with Herod Philip I, who lived the life of a private gentleman in Rome. He was one of the less harmful of the sons of that royal criminal, Herod the Great. When Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, had occasion to go to Rome to make sure of his claim to the tetrarchy, he became the guest of this Herod Philip. When he left he not only had secured the tetrarchy, but he had robbed his brother

of his wife and daughter, who were both as wicked as they were beautiful. His crime, which was not only adulterous, but by the Mosaic law doubly incestuous, was an abomination to the Jews, and public opinion against him became much bitterer when he cast off his former wife and plunged his country into war with her father, King Aretas of Petra. To have the most popular preacher of the time denounce his conduct was more alarming to Herod than were the troops of Aretas. He could not afford to be **reproved** at such a time, so he **shut up John in prison**. This was a most iniquitous crime, and led logically to a worse crime—the murder of John. And yet by a comparison of this story with Mark 6. 17-20 and Matt. 14. 3-5 we are persuaded that Antipas was profoundly impressed by John's righteousness, and it is probable that one of several mixed motives in the shutting him up in prison was to make him safe against the plottings of Herodias.

21. Now when all the people were bap-

Verse 15. In expectation. The preaching of John had stirred not the politics, the people, nor the interest of the multitudes in commerce, art, literature, or science, but it did profoundly affect the national conscience. That was the particular mission he was sent to accomplish. As a moral reformer echoing the voice of God he was sent to prepare the way. The people were forced to think. That a moral revolution was imminent could not be denied. The multitudes were in suspense; the preacher and his message produced controversy. **All men mused in their hearts** whether or not he was the long expected and desired Messiah. The short cut to the overthrow of evil conditions is by the way of the conscience. Man is a moral being, and all reforms based on expediency, self-interest, or any other interest partake of the temporary, superficial character of those interests. Moral truth only can cure an immoral world.

16. John answered. The true prophet never leaves the people long in doubt concerning himself for his mission. **I . . . baptize.** As John was inferior to Christ, as his work was merely introductory to the redemptive work of Christ, so he subordinates, as in the nature of things he must, the baptism with water to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The first is an outward sign indicative of repentance; the second is not a sign at all, but the essential thing itself producing the new birth. The difference, therefore, between John's baptism and Christian baptism, which is a sign of regeneration, is a wide difference. **He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.** With the coming of Jesus as the world-Redeemer was the coming in of a new force into humanity, the Holy Spirit. He was in the world before, was in it from

tized. When the day's crowd had been baptized and the public ceremony was over. **Jesus also being baptized.** "It became him to fulfill all righteousness." **Praying.** Jesus himself needed prayer. It was when he prayed that the heaven was opened; two years later, when he prayed, the great transfiguration occurred; later still, when he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, angels came and comforted him.

22. The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape. To permanently equip him for the work (Acts 10. 38; John 1. 28; 3. 34). Probably the general understanding is correct, that the form of a dove hovered over the head of Christ; although the other interpretation—that "like a dove" alludes to the manner of descent and not to the form—may be correct. **Voice . . . from heaven.** An articulate voice. **Thou art my beloved Son.** Literally, "Thou art my Son, the Beloved." This implies the doctrine of the blessed Trinity.

CRITICAL NOTES.

the beginning, but in no such plenitude of power, in no such definite, resultful relationships to men as at the coming of the Lord Christ. **And with fire.** This is not another form of the statement relative to the Holy Spirit. The cleansing, evil-destroying effect of the Holy Spirit on thoughts, beliefs, life, and character will be as the application of fire to combustible material. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of life, and he searches out the hidden things of man's spirit, seeking to overcome the forces in the recesses of the spirit that make for death.

17. Whose fan is in his hand. All shams, hypocrisies, false beliefs, religious, social, and political, go down before the presence of Jesus the Christ, the express image of the everlasting reality. Jesus comes to teach men truth, to sift out the false from the true, and to bring men into right relations with God and the nature of things in order that they might realize their true freedom. **Purge his floor.** John, with prophetic insight into the character and mission of the Messiah, describes in few words the effect of his appearance. History is crowded into syllables. Days of fire and sword and confusion and doubt and alarm are to come. Hoary wrongs, organized tyrannies, entrenched iniquities, and false views of God and human relationships do not succumb without a struggle. **The wheat,** the good and true of whatever people, race, age, sphere of thought, or activity, he will gather, preserve it, in his garner; but **the chaff,** the useless, deceptive, cruel, evil-breeding forces, principles, which influence human history and destroy men's souls, **he will burn with fire unquenchable,** utterly and forever destroy. Christianity is a world religion. Its mission is world redemption. By regenerating the hearts of

individuals it seeks to regenerate the world and make all things new.

19. But Herod. There is not one moral law for the masses and another for the exalted few. In the presence of eternal righteousness there are no kings, nor poets, nor novelists, nor mighty geniuses whose intellectual or aesthetic gifts place them apart from the universe of common sinners. The moral principles laid down by John applied to Herod, as they did to Herod's subjects. All are sinners.

20. He shut up John in prison. Afraid of his influence over the people. Fearful of his throne, but unwilling to turn from the wrong that had attracted the lightning of John, he adds to his iniquity by incarcerating the faithful preacher, and thinks he has eluded justice. History has its revenges. Physical force never yet destroyed a useful truth. Killing prophets does not kill conscience, which is always on the side of the prophets.

21. Jesus also being baptized. The Lord Jesus honored the mission of John, and recognized him in the presence of the multitude by submitting to the sacred rite of baptism. While Jesus was praying. It is not enough to perform the act, or to submit to it. Soul surrender is demanded, otherwise there is no death to the world and the flesh.

22. The Holy Ghost descended. The Holy Trinity is revealed. The Son praying, the Holy Spirit coming upon him, the Father speaking. **In a bodily shape like a dove.** To become visible the infinite Holy Spirit must appear in some form. The Spirit of God is not a diffused energy emanating from the Father. He is a person, and if angels can appear there is nothing startling in the manifestation of the divine Spirit in bodily form under the limitations of time and space. **A voice came from heaven.** The multitude heard it. God the Father proclaimed his Son Jesus to be the Redeemer of the world. In him the Father was well pleased. His incarnation, his humiliation to human conditions, his entrance upon his work, which would end only in his sacrificial death, all received the divine approbation. The interpretation of the meaning of this declaration may not have been clear and certain to those who heard. But the voice from heaven came not for them only, but for the whole race. No revelation of heaven is for one people only, nor for one age, but for all ages and for all people, so that the revelations of God are in a profound sense a continuous reality to all who believe.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Baptist's Ministry.

I. A MINISTRY OF EXPECTATION.

People were in expectation. v. 15.

Who art thou? John 1. 19-23.

Elijah the prophet. Mal. 4. 5.

II. A MINISTRY OF REPENTANCE.

Baptize you with water. v. 16.

Baptism of repentance. Luke 3. 8.

Fruits... of repentance. Luke 3. 8.

III. A MINISTRY OF PROMISE.

One mightier than I. v. 16.

Behold the Lamb. John 1. 29.

Will pour out my spirit. Joel 2. 28, 29.

IV. A MINISTRY OF WARNING.

Fan is in his hand. v. 17.

Burn as an oven. Mal. 4. 1.

Ungodly... like the chaff. Psalm 1. 4.

V. A MINISTRY OF COURAGE.

Herod... reproved by him. v. 19.

A reed shaken with the wind? Matt. 11. 7.

Them that sin rebuke. 1 Tim. 5. 20.

VI. A MINISTRY OF SUFFERING.

Shut up John in prison. v. 20.

I must decrease. John 3. 29, 30.

Not at the things... seen. 2 Cor. 4. 18.

Thoughts for Young People.

John's Message to Us.

1. We should repent because there is a wrath to come. Wisely did Mr. Wesley make desire to flee from that wrath the condition of union with his societies. Eternal justice punishes sin. We are all sinners, and should flee from its power and its penalty.

2. We should repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. By repentance only may we enter. Christ winnows human souls. His fan is in his hand. By every moral responsibility we meet we are placing ourselves among the wheat or the chaff, among the citizens of the kingdom or its enemies.

3. We should repent, for by that means only can we be endued with the Holy Ghost. All human beings are informed, "possessed," by the Spirit of God or the spirit of evil. By repentance we turn away from all evil influences, and then comes the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire.

4. We should manifest our repentance by doing our daily duties with new zeal, as unto the Lord. John told neither publican nor soldier nor priest to leave his daily vocation, but to do the old duties from new and lofty principles. No penitent can be a lax or impure man.

5. We should manifest our repentance by living for others. He who does not with free heart contribute to the welfare of others, not only lacks the spirit of Christ, but has not even got as far as John the Baptist.

6. We should show our repentance by turning from the forerunner to the mighty One whom he announces. Some of John's followers failed to become disciples of Jesus. And there are not wanting members of our modern churches whose zeal seems to slacken when the personality that aroused

them to repentance is withdrawn. Let us follow our ministers and teachers as they follow Christ.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

"Who is this?" people are asking. "Who is this wonderful man?"

Out of the wilderness came a voice saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

With the voice came a figure clad in a garment of camel's hair, a leathern girdle about his loins. His food was of the simplest kind, locusts and honey from the rocks and the trees.

And then how people flocked to hear him!

They still flock to listen. They come from Jerusalem, from Galilee, from the shores of the Great Sea, from the south country. There are priests from the temple, scribes from the copying and teaching of the law, soldiers from the Roman army, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the high and the low.

Wonderful man, thus to gather to his feet so many listeners, thus to sway their wills, thus to lead them to the waters of baptism and the ways of a new life!

Yes, a wonderful man.

Man? Is he not more than man? Is he not the long expected Messiah? "Ah," says some one with a good memory, "was there not something strange about the announcement of his birth, an angel in the temple seen by his father? Yes, this is the Messiah!"

But, no, the wonderful man does not claim to be the man, Israel's Hope, Zion's King. One mightier than he, John the Baptist, is coming.

And what a picture John sketches!

All souls gathered on the threshing floor, all before the Messiah, and then how like a fan his judgments go through them!

In a goodly heap falls the grain.

Off flies the chaff!

O, day of heart-searching, when the Master of the harvest shall come down to the threshing floor and begin the separating and the sifting!

John is not this heart-searcher, this separator of souls, the Messiah.

One day, though, he, the Messiah, comes.

It is a day when John is baptizing in Jordan. Many are about John.

But who is this before the Baptist?

Whence that serious, earnest face; those far-reaching, far-searching eyes, burning like a clear flame; that presence, human-like, and yet bringing an atmosphere through which you look and see one far higher?

They stand side by side in the Jordan, this strange man and John. The latter baptizes, when what a scene!

John with his penetrating spiritual vision

recognizes it all—the heavens opening, the Holy Ghost descending like a dove; and then that solemn voice from heaven is saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

Messiah has come, the heart-searcher, Judge, Redeemer!

John sees it all.

With power he can present the truth, and like a battle-ax swung against wrong go out his words.

But is this all that John can do? Is he only a voice to reach the slumbering and arouse the careless? Is he only a forerunner of the King? Do-little privilege!

But there is another king, Herod.

His life is bad. He has taken to wife Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. He has been the author of other evils. Will John the Baptist face this other king? Is he just good for preaching sermons and baptizing, not for reaching and rebuking an enemy?

Time goes on; John the Baptist rises up, confronts Herod, and dares tell him the truth.

O, how great the mistake of John, do you say? He is seized. Between grim files of soldiers he is marched off to prison. There he lies in a cell. Is he good only for this?

One day the executioner comes to John's cell.

John is ready, and his soul is let out into the large place of God's liberty and God's love.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

John's expression, "The latelet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose," is especially significant when we recall the fact that the servant of the priests or prophets might be called on to do any menial service; except that of untying his sandals. Shoes are not worn in the house, much less in the temples or mosques, by Hindus and Moslems. Native Christians follow the custom of the country in this respect in India, and quantities of shoes are found at the doors of schoolrooms and chapels. The priests among II brews were prohibited wearing shoes in the temple service, hence they usually appeared before the altar in their bare feet. Geikie, writing of Damascus, describes a splendid dwelling, built by a Jew long since dead, having a great room inlaid with precious stones and countless mirrors, in white marble, with a court paved with marble and a fountain in the center. At the side a door opened into the divan, or company room, covered with fine mats, on entering which all persons took off their shoes or slippers, "partly from respect to the host, but still more because prayer may have been said in the room, making it holy ground." He also says of the chapel of the Holy Sepulcher: "Huge marble candlesticks, with gigantic wax candles, lighted only on high days, stand before the Chapel of the Angels, on entering which pil-

grins take off their shoes before treading on ground so sacred."

Thomson in describing Yebna, three hours and a half from Jaffa, with about a thousand inhabitants, speaks of the "ridiculous Arab machines" of agriculture. He says: "When I passed this way two years ago there were hundreds of men, women, and children reaping, gleaming, and carrying away the grain to their great threshing floors. Long lines of camels, bearing on their backs burdens many times larger than themselves, were slowly converging to a point here at Yebna, from every part of the plain, and the grain lay in heaps almost mountains high. The threshing floors were arranged all round the town, and the scene was picturesque.... The grain as it is threshed is heaped up in the center of the 'floor' until it frequently becomes a little mound much higher than the workmen. This is particularly the case when there is no wind for several days, for the only way adopted to separate the chaff from the wheat is to toss it up into the air, when the grain falls in one place and the chaff is carried on to another."

It is well known that this "threshing floor" was a smooth surface of rock or leveled, compacted earth—by preference on an elevation. The first separation of straw and threshing was by rake; the second, of the remaining straw and chaff, by a fork; and the last by a broad wooden shovel or scoop, with which the grain and remaining chaff were thrown into the air. This was called a "fan." John Baptist's figure of separation of good from bad by the "fan" of divine Providence would appeal readily to the understanding of the people.

The symbol of a dove would also be readily apprehended, as it was everywhere the emblem of purity and gentleness. Even the pagan Syrians and Phœnicians so honored it that they placed the dove on their ensigns, and are reputed to have elevated it to a place among their divinities. According to Hebrew law, it was the one and only bird that could be brought as a sacrifice, and it was specially dear to the poorer classes as an offering within the reach of their pecuniary means. The descent of the Holy Ghost like a dove as the emblem of peace, purity, and the ultimate triumphant power of the spiritual over material forces, recalls that Phœnician coins have been found with the design of a dove with folded wings sitting on a globe.

By Way of Illustration.

The ministry of John the Baptist. All the gospels record or refer to the mission of John the Baptist. In Matthew the Baptist heralds Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews, coming in fulfillment of the law and the prophets. In Mark the work of the Baptist is introduced to exhibit by contrast

the mightier power of the Son of God, who comes to set up the kingdom of God. In Luke, to bring forward Jesus as the one perfect man, placing himself on a level with all mankind by coming to be baptized "when all the people were baptized." In John, to witness to Jesus as the divine, only begotten Son of God, the life and light of men.—*Bishop H. W. Warren.*

Verses 15 and 16. The humility of John is very prominent. When he is at the high tide of popularity and is asked if he is the Christ or Elijah, he declares that he is only a voice in the wilderness. He is willing to be nameless and only a "witness," as the evangelist calls him.

A famous artist painting the Last Supper found that some cups on the table, which had been decorated with great care, attracted more attention than the face of Christ. They were very beautiful and a matter of artistic pride, and yet he erased them that Christ might be first in that picture.

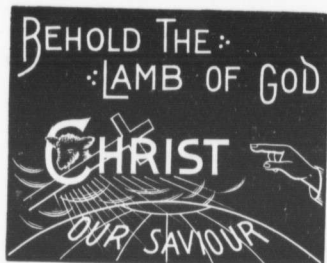
In Revelation the teacher or minister is spoken of as a candlestick. The candlestick has no light in itself. Its work is to hold up the candle, to shed abroad the light.

Verses 17 and 18. John the Baptist had no message of divine help for the people. In this respect his preaching was a preparation for the more hopeful and inspiring message of the Christ. Before Christ's baptism, he was a preacher of the law; after Christ's baptism, he became a preacher of the Gospel. Looking upon Jesus as he walked he said, "Behold the Lamb of God."—*Lyman Abbott.*

Verses 19 and 20. Hunters have watched, back of their camp fire, as it illumined the dark recesses of the forest, the bright and curious eyes of the deers as they stole out of their hiding place, and so have been easy marks for the rifle ball. Fishermen with flaring torch attract their game within thrust of the spear. So the strong, clear blaze of truth as it dwelt on the prophet's soul brought the king again and again within its revealings. It struck him hard in his evil course. By a strange compulsion he sought the unrolling of the record till his monstrous offenses were all stated. "Perplexed" the evangelist says he was. Between conflicting purposes he was driven till the wily schemes of his angry spouse brought the grim farce to a terrible end.—*De Witt S. Clark.*

Verses 21 and 22. God gives us, as he gave to John, all the proofs we need concerning the divinity of Christ. "How do you know that Christ is the Son of God?" was asked of a mission convert who had been deep in sin. "I know it because he forgave my sins, and only God can do that."

Blackboard.



A FAITHFUL MINISTER.

BAPTIZING WITH WATER.	PROPHESYING OF CHRIST.
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POINTING TO CHRIST.

A VOICE CRYING.

"PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD."

BEHOLD
THE LAMB OF GOD.

WORK SALVATION OF SINNERS.	WITNESSES VISION AND VOICE.
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THE END.

WHEAT | CHAFF

GARNERED. | BURNED.

REFLECT. CHOOSE. FOLLOW.

The Teachers' Meeting.

This lesson requires careful management because of a certain "lack of unity." It includes many persons, places, and incidents. Do not permit side discussions to efface the lesson of the Golden Text. Group all the incidental facts and lessons about the great duty of repentance.... Spend a minute or two on "synchronisms:" The ages of Jesus and John; changes in rulers—Pontius Pilate,

Herod Antipas, etc.... Have the geography of the lesson clearly in mind: Characteristics of the wilderness of Judea near the river Jordan; the castle of Machaerus; the great political divisions of Palestine, etc.... Study in close connection with the parallel passages in three other gospels.... Trace parallel between Elijah and John the Baptist.... The meaning of John's baptism; avoid much discussion about its form.... Constituency of the "multitudes" to whom John preached.... Analysis of his sermons: (1) Distinct characteristics of his hypocritical hearers, "broods of vipers" (Matt. 23. 33); (2) Distinct statement of the "wrath to come"; (3) Clear understanding of their baseless confidence; (4) Exhortation to such repentance as would lead to rectitude, humility, and brotherly love; (5) Clear announcement of the coming Saviour; (6) His figures taken from desert life.... Show how direct preaching and teaching always produce direct results. Study John's methods and learn from him.... Lessons from Herod's sin.... Lessons from baptism of Jesus: (1) Reasons for his baptism; (2) Reasons for John's reluctance; (3) God's recognition of Christ's divinity; (4) Effect of this recognition on John, on the Jews in general.... This is the story of a great revival. I. Note the preaching that brought on the revival: (1) Earnest; (2) Scriptural; (3) Practical; (4) Fearless. II. Note the results of such a ministry: (1) Awakening; (2) Inquiring; (3) Repentance; (4) Opposition; (5) Christ's coming.... Prayers of Jesus: Before the baptism; before the transfiguration; in Gethsemane; on Calvary.... A good method of grouping this lesson will be: I. John's sermon; II. Jesus's baptism; III. John's imprisonment.... Notice Thoughts for Young People.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire.
Come, Holy Ghost, in love.
Almighty Spirit, we confess.
Now is the accepted time.
When Jesus comes.

No. 2.

Jesus, thou everlasting King.
The praying spirit breathe.
Father, to thee my soul I lift.
Sowing in the morning.
We come thy praise to sing.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 16: The shoe latchet, 791; sandals, 832. Ver. 17: Winnowing grain, 634.

A. D. 28.] LESSON IV. THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS. [Jan. 26.]**GOLDEN TEXT.** His word was with power. Luke 4. 22.**Authorized Version.****Luke 4. 14-22.***[Commit to memory verses 18, 19.]**[Study whole chapter, Luke 4.]*

14 And Je'sus returned in the power of the Spirit into Gal'i-lee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Naz'a-reth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet E-sa'ias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 'The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Jo'seph's son?

Revised Version.

14 And Je'sus returned in the power of the Spirit into Gal'i-lee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Naz'a-reth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet I-sa'iah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

18 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruise-d,

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears. And

all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Jo'seph's son?

TIME.—Probably very early in A. D. 28. **PLACE.**—Nazareth, in Galilee, the home of Je'sus's childhood and youth.

HOME READINGS.

M. Early Ministry of Jesus. Luke 4. 14-22.

Tu. The ministry rejected. Luke 4. 23-32.

W. Ministry of mercy. Luke 4. 33-44.

Th. Isaiah's prophecy. Isa. 61.

F. Hindered by unbelief. Mark 6. 1-6.

S. A Deliverer. Isa. 42. 1-8.

S. Made free. Rom. 6. 15-23.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 4. New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing.

No. 91. New Canadian Hymnal.

Thy faithfulness, Lord, each moment we find.

No. 82. New Canadian Hymnal.

"Whoever heareth," shout, shout the sound!

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**I. Prophecy, v. 14-19.**

Where did Jesus go after his baptism, and why? (Verses 1, 2.)

What were the three temptations? (Verses 3, 6, 9.)

With what weapons did Jesus resist temptation?

Who were his first disciples? (John 1. 40, 41.)

What was his first miracle? (John 2. 1-11.)

In what Galilean town did he sojourn? (John 2. 12.)

When did he make his first public appearance in Jerusalem as a teacher? [*Ans.* At the passover feast of A. D. 27.]

Through what region did he go on his return from Judea to Samaria? (John 4.)

To what city of his youth did he return?

What was his place of resort on the Sabbath?

What part did he take in the synagogue service?

From what book did he read?

Why did he stand up to read?

What words did he read?

Where is this passage to be found? (Isa. 61. 1, 2.)

What may we learn from our Lord's application of this ideal to himself?

2. Fulfillment, v. 20-22.

After reading, what did Jesus do?

What was the "minister"?

What shows the interest of the people?

What sort of a throng was this?

What is implied in the phrase "began to say"?

At what did the people wonder?

What is meant by "gracious words"?

What question did they ask one another?

What is said of Jesus's preaching? (GOLDEN

TEXT.)

How did the people receive his words? (Verse 29.)

Name two miracles which Jesus wrought at Capernaum. (Verses 33-29.)

What other miracles did he perform? (Verses 40, 41.)

Practical Teachings.

1. The true Christian maintains the holy "custom" of his divine Master touching the Sabbath day.

2. The Nazarenes' rejection of Jesus was due simply to their familiarity with him—a cause which works as much harm to-day as it did then.

3. When those blessed with golden opportunities reject them, the opportunities are offered to others.

Where in this lesson may we find a good example—

1. Of churchgoing?
2. Of reverence to God?
3. Of attentive hearing?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. Verses 14-19.**

14. Where did Jesus go after his temptation? What effect had the temptation on him? Where did he perform his first miracle? Mention some things Jesus did during the first year of his ministry.

15. Why was he so popular at this time?

16. Where was Nazareth? How did Jesus observe the Sabbath?

17. How were the Old Testament Scriptures written? From what roll did Jesus read?

18. Why was he anointed? Why are we to bring

the Gospel to the poor? Mention three blessings Jesus brought.

19. What took place in the year of jubilee?

2. Verses 20-22.

20. Why did Jesus hand the roll to the minister? Of what was it a sign when Jesus sat down? Why did they all look at him with such attention? 22. How did they bear him witness? At what did they wonder? Did they accept him?

Teachings of the Lesson.

To overcome temptation increases power. Jesus set us an example in regularly attending service in God's house. We should seek the salvation of our friends and companions. The Gospel brings pardon, freedom from sin, and hope of heaven. To become a Christian is to enjoy a true jubilee—rest, release from captivity, and to be made children and heirs of God. Everyone should pay close attention to the preacher and teacher.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where was Jesus led after his baptism?

What did he do after this was ended?

Where did Jesus live before he began to preach?

Were the people glad to see him again?

Do you know why?

How did Jesus spend the Sabbath day?

What is a synagogue?

Can you tell how it differs from a church?

Who read the lesson that day?

Where was it?

Did Jesus read from a book? **No, from a parchment roll.**

About whom did Jesus read?

What did he do then?

What did he say was fulfilled that day?

What made the people wonder?

What evil thing did they try to do?

Something to Remember.

That Jesus's words are good words.

That Jesus shows us here how to keep the Sabbath.

That "this day" is the day to hear Jesus and obey him.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**General Statement.**

Great events have taken place in the eighteen months since the voice of the prophet sounded from the shore of Jordan. Already the Baptist's work is finished, and the door of Herod's prison by the Dead Sea has closed upon him. The carpenter of Nazareth now stands before the people as their promised Redeemer. The declaration of the forerunner and the voice from heaven proclaim him to be the Son of God, and his mighty works and wonderful words attest his divinity. From the baptismal stream he has gone down to the wilderness, and proved his purity and his power by a victory over the tempter. Again, at the Jordan, he is pointed out by John as the Lamb of God, and a few disciples gather around him (John 1). At a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee he first shows his miraculous power, and soon after, by driving the traders from the court of the temple at Jerusalem, he asserts divine authority (John 2). The fame of the new Teacher resounds through the land, but as already the Pharisees

of Jerusalem look coldly upon him, he turns his footsteps toward his own Galilee. Resting awhile by the patriarch's well, he wins the soul of the Samaritan woman (John 4), and then passes on his way, preaching in the synagogues and teaching by the wayside and the lakeshore. Once again he stands among the familiar scenes of his boyhood at Nazareth—not now the carpenter, but the prophet of renown. The village synagogue is crowded with his former neighbors and workfellows, and every eye is turned toward the young man of whom such strange things are told. He reads the prophetic scroll, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, and calmly appropriates the prediction to himself, while the hearts of his listeners wonder at his gracious words, and are filled with scornful unbelief at his lofty claims.

Verse 14. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit. He returned from Jerusalem by way of Jacob's well. The manifestation of a divine indwelling which had been slowly growing through the years, reaching its fullness at the hour of his baptism, and thenceforward a mighty power rested upon him through all his ministry. **Galilee.** The northern province of Palestine, at this time under the rule of Herod Antipas. **Fame of him.** Such power as he possessed must attract notice, especially at a time when the land was feverish in its expectation of a deliverer from the Roman yoke. His miracles, though few as yet, and his recent expulsion of the traders from the temple would swell the fame. This fame was not an unmixed advantage; it precipitated several perplexing problems.

15. He taught in their synagogues. The synagogues arose after the return from Babylonian captivity, B. C. 536. They were places in which the Jews gathered every Sabbath (Saturday), Monday, and Tuesday, and often on other special occasions, for worship, the reading of the law, and its exposition. **Glorified of all.** "Honored by all." All recognized his inspiration and authority, and multitudes flocked to hear his words. It was a brief period of universal popularity, soon to pass away and turn into hatred, as the principles of the new kingdom were revealed to unwilling ears.

16. He came to Nazareth. Whether this visit was the same as that related in Matt. 13. 53-58 and Mark 6. 1-6 is uncertain. The order of the narratives counts for little, because all of the evangelists vary at times from strict chronological sequence. Many high authorities maintain that this visit is unrecorded except in this passage. From the other gospels we learn that his disciples were with him, and that a few of his townsmen had sufficient faith to bring to him their sick, but he could not heal many because of their unbelief. **Where he had been brought up.** If any other man had come to Nazareth with a spirit of righteousness, wisdom, truth, and grace such as Jesus displayed, the whole town would have turned out to do him honor. If a priest, glistening with jewels, had come down from Jerusalem, every word he uttered would have been memorized and his blessing craved; but this man was the town carpenter. The boys who had played with him

and the men who had hired him were his audience now, and they felt disposed to say, "We all know as much as Jesus does; carpenter, stick to your bench and tools." **His custom.** None can be excused from the public worship of God since our Great Exemplar regarded it his duty. Probably until that time he had sat as "a silent worshipper," and not presumed to teach. **The synagogue.** The word "the" indicates that there was only one in Nazareth. There were few villages without at least one. **Stood up for to read.** The Holy Scriptures were kept in an ark or box curtained from the rest of the room, and each book was written on a separate roll. The congregation squatted on the floor, the richer ones reclining on cushions, and the sexes were separated by a lattice which ran down the center of the room. All the people faced Jerusalem, for no Jew could pray with his face in any other direction than toward the holy house. The reader or preacher stood up to read and sat down to make his comments. There were no recognized ministers in our modern use of that term in a synagogue. Priests and Levites had no official connection with it.

17. There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. There were two lessons read in each Sabbath's service, the first of which was always taken from the books of Moses, which were usually put up on one parchment roll, and the second from the prophets, each of which was on a roll by itself. The prophet Esaias, or Isaiah, was therefore handed to our Lord unopened, which is the cause of the second sentence in this verse—**when he had opened the book, he found the place.** This "place" was very probably a regular lesson of the day, like those of the modern Protestant Episcopal prayer book, but this is not at all certain. The text was in Hebrew, a language with the characters and sense of which the Jews were familiar, but which was itself dead and unknown to them; so either the reader himself or an interpreter had to turn it, sentence by sentence, into the Aramaic dialect, which was spoken throughout Galilee. And this makes plain the meaning of the sneer, "How doth this man know letters, having never learned?" **The place where it was written.** Isa. 61. 1, 2; 18. 19. The quotations in these two verses are made, not from our Old Testament, which is trans-

lated from the ancient Hebrew, but from the Septuagint, a Greek version which was widely circulated in Palestine at this time, and which was used on occasion by both the Lord and his apostles. There are variations in this quotation from both authorities.

18. The words to set at liberty them that are bruised do not occur in Isaiah. Our Lord used this comforting passage as a sort of summary of what he intended to do. It was generally understood to refer to the return of the Israelites from their bondage. Many believed, however, that it was still prophetic, the golden glory which it pointed out having never been reached by Israel. But they were not prepared for Jesus' statement that these things were fulfilled in their ears. Many of the variations have been explained by some scholars as being a running comment made at the time by our Lord; they were extracts from his sermon. **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.** To a special and peculiar degree. **To preach the gospel.** To proclaim the good news to the poor, who were neglected in the ancient East as they are nowhere neglected in modern Christendom. **To heal the broken-hearted.** We have been converted for no other purpose than to perform the six duties mentioned in this verse and the next. **Recovering of sight to the blind.** Our version reads, "Opening of the prison to the bound."

19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. The allusion of Isaiah was to the year of jubilee, the keeping of which was ordered in Lev. 25. 8-10. That year of jubilee was generally understood to be a type of the great jubilee of the kingdom of God. In spite of variations of phraseology, it will be observed that the spirit and tone of the passage quoted by Luke and the corresponding passage in our lesson are identical.

Verse 14. Returned in the power of the Spirit. The power of the Spirit is not merely anointing, as some commentators are content to interpret. It is an endowment of joy and peace and absolute confidence; but it is more; it is a baptism of energy. The power of the Spirit is the working of the energy of the thought of God under human limitations. As a victor from the field of conflict with the prince of darkness, Jesus returned in the full consciousness of this power. **Went out a fame of him.** His divine power manifested itself in marvelous ways. It could not, for he willed not that it should, be restrained. He was the Healer, the Redeemer, and in works of mercy and love his power delighted.

15. He taught in their synagogues. Miracles were seals of authority, not designed primarily for convicting men of sin and of righteousness. The moral nature of man is reached and in-

20. Closed the book. Rolled it up. It was made up of vellum skins, sewed together, and fastened to a long wooden roller at each end. Hebrew is read from right to left, so that the reader, by rapid movements of the fingers, is continually unrolling with his left hand what he rolls up with his right hand. When he concluded he placed the two rolls together and gave it again to the minister, and sat down. This must have profoundly surprised his auditors. The second lesson always consisted of twenty-one verses; Jesus had read two, then suddenly stopped. Sitting on the platform of a synagogue was equivalent to mounting the pulpit steps in a modern church, and this carpenter there and then publicly assumed the functions of teacher. **The minister** was an officer of the synagogue who took care of the books.

21. Began to say. His sermon was an amplification of this sentence, **This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.**

22. Bare him witness. They scorned his claims, but seem to have had a local pride in his eloquence. **Wondered.** Were astonished. **Gracious words.** Words of grace. **They said.** It was perfectly proper and conventional of them to thus speak out in meeting, for the synagogue was not a shrine for formal worship, but rather a place for reverent discussion, more like a Bible class than a Sunday morning sermon. **Is not this Joseph's son?** This son of the carpenter was no fit teacher for them. The miraculous birth of our Lord, if it had ever been heard of by his townsmen, was certainly not credited by them. Very quickly the preacher caught the mind and feeling of his audience; he felt its scornful challenge before a word was uttered. Verses 23 and 24 tell us how he met that challenge.

CRITICAL NOTES.

fluenced through his moral powers, the power to perceive and to apprehend moral truth. Between the moral nature of man and divine truth there is a divinely constituted harmony. Jesus sought to show the truth of God, that seeing it men might love it and live it. He taught. True preaching is sound teaching.

16. As his custom was. In the synagogue his Father was worshipped; there, from his youth, Jesus was found on the Sabbath. There, on that holy day, he is found yet revealing himself to the hearts of true worshippers as he revealed himself and his mission on earth to the worshippers in the synagogue at Nazareth. **And stood up for to read.** The Scriptures were read standing, the pastor, as we would say, calling on some one to read. Seeing Jesus rising up he recognized his wish and gave him the sacred roll. In the mysterious working of God's providence the Book of

Isaiah, of all the books of the Old Testament, was handed to him. Behind all history is God, and there are no accidents. Little things, the most common-place things, have times without number been the pivots on which the greatest events have turned.

17. He found. Apparently fortuitously, but in reality providentially, the division in the Book of Isaiah which includes the prophecies relating to the Messiah, his office, sufferings, triumphs, and atoning death.

18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. The prophet was inspired to declare deliverance to the exiles and to announce the Messianic glory of the future. In the meaning of Christ this declaration is read as if it was now made of him. Every word is his declaration of himself and his mission. In the Greek text we must note the change of tense in the words rendered "hath anointed," "hath sent." **To preach the gospel to the poor.** Our Lord in this first announcement of his Messiahship corrects the popular conception of what the Messiah of God shall be. He will not be a temporal king, nor the leader of armies for the political deliverance of Israel. The thralldom of mind, the darkness and slavery of soul, are worse evils than political subjection. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, and his triumphs shall be in the realm of spirit. From that realm influences will emerge that will solve all political problems, Jesus himself began at the bottom; his preaching begins at the lowest rung of the social ladder. The **poor** are the needy, the cringing, the submerged. The **gospel** is for them; it is heaven's ordained help to lift them out of their condition, not into wealth, but into conscious vital relationship to society and to God. **Hath sent me.** "Hath sent me," and, as Meyer notes, "here I am." The work of Christ among men was ordained of the Father; the work of the Christian ministry is ordained of Christ, "As my Father hath sent me, so I send you." "To heal the broken-hearted." These are the crushed, subdued, broken ones who have gone under in life's conflicts. The victims of force, of cruel artificial circumstances, find in Christ the healer of all wounds, and in him only can abiding comfort be found. **To preach deliverance.** Isaiah proclaimed freedom to the exiles; Jesus proclaims the higher freedom of the soul, captive in the meshes of sin and the results that inevitably flow out of sin into society, and bind men to degrading servitude of mind and heart. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." True freedom is the highest realization of one's own powers. **Of sight to the blind.** Spiritual conditions are set forth in physical types. The outer is index to the inner. The Messiah will give sight to the physically blind as evidence that he can also open the eyes of the soul. The soul was made to see God; its blindness to truth and to God is its eternal

wretchedness, for between the soul and moral darkness there never can be natural harmony.

Them that are bruised. To give liberty to the oppressed from whatever cause. The evils which burden men are not solely the result of ignorance of the laws which may control in commerce, but in far larger degree they are the direct outcome of willful ignoring of the laws of Jesus, humanity's King. Apply his laws and the world will enter upon a career of freedom and happiness. Jesus is the only Saviour of humanity, and to Jesus at last, in sheer despair, after the experiences of centuries, the world will come.

21. This day is this scripture. He declares himself to be the Messiah thus characterized by the prophet. From the tenor of the scripture read we suppose Jesus discoursed on the spiritual condition of man and the work he came to do. To the worshipers in the synagogue he unfolded the true mission of the Messiah and the blessings that would follow. Few were ever so favored on this earth. And they

22. All bare him witness. With his interpretation of the prophecy they found no fault. With his sympathy for humanity they were charmed. They **wondered** at his words, they admired him; but when the idea broke in upon them of his real meaning, and his knowledge of them was revealed by him to them, wrath and envy supplanted all else, and from being worshipers they became murderers. In every congregation there are those whose religion consists in admiration of sermons and of the beauty of Christianity as a system of truth, but their admiration is no antidote to lives of sin and rejection of Christ as their Redeemer sent from God.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Ministry of Jesus.

I. A MINISTRY OF POWER.

In the power.... spirit. v. 14.

Ye shall receive power. Acts 1. 8.

Endued with power. Luke 24. 49.

II. A TEACHING MINISTRY.

Taught in.... synagogues. v. 15.

As one having authority. Matt. 7. 28, 29.

Never man spake like this man. John 7. 46.

III. A SCRIPTURAL MINISTRY.

The book of the prophet. v. 17.

All Scripture is.... profitable. 2 Tim. 3. 16.

They.... testify of me. John 5. 39.

IV. A MINISTRY TO THE POOR.

To preach.... to the poor. v. 18.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Matt. 5. 3.

All ye that labor. Matt. 11. 28.

V. A MINISTRY OF COMFORT.

To heal the broken-hearted. v. 18.

Blessed are they that mourn. Matt. 5. 4.

Let not your heart be troubled. John 14. 1.

VI. A MINISTRY OF LIBERTY.

Deliverance to the captives: v. 18.

Truth shall make you free. John 8. 32.

Christ hath made us free. Gal. 5. 1.

Thoughts for Young People.

Jesus as a Preacher.

1. *Jesus was fearless and direct.* He goes to the place where he has played as a child, gone to school, and learned his trade. He tells his old companions that he is the Messiah, and this he does on the Sabbath day, when all the worshipful Nazarenes were present, and in the boldest and most direct fashion.

2. *He was kind.* No human sympathy has ever equaled the sympathy of Jesus. His auditors were politically oppressed. He came to preach deliverance to them. They were broken-hearted because of enforced poverty and disappointed ambitions. He came to heal the broken-hearted. Diseases afflicted the community then to a degree unknown within the bounds of civilization now, and the blind were more common then than any other afflicted ones. He came to restore sight to the blind. One half of the community was in daily peril from threatened starvation; he came to give good tidings to the poor. The whole nation was suffering like a bastinadoed criminal; he came to set at liberty those that were oppressed—to preach a year of jubilee to all. Even the stolid Nazarenes knew that their poverty and sickness and national degradation were, after all, paltry types and symbols of that more abject degradation which is spiritual. These temporal afflictions were light compared with their spiritual burdens. This preacher came to preach a spiritual gospel also, that should emancipate all men from all their ills and sorrows.

3. *He was gracious.* It is a singular fact that the word "grace," which the old heathens used to indicate physical beauty, is the same that the inspired writers have used to indicate spiritual beauty. We should be gracious and graceful, kind and loving, and beautiful in our spiritual lives. This divine preacher is our exemplar in that as well as in his fearless rectitude, for all wondered at the graciousness of the words which proceeded out of his mouth.

4. *His sermon was to all men everywhere.* There were no limitations to Jesus's love. Elijah went to Sarepta, and Elisha healed a man who lived in Damascus, but Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

5. *Even this preacher is limited by the unbelief of his hearers,* and if the Lord of glory cannot do mighty works because of unbelief, why should we blame our minister if in all his endeavors he is not supported by faithful hearts and loving hands?

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Nazareth has not forgotten Jesus, "Joseph's son," so called. A long, long while he went to and from his work as carpenter, driving the saw or swinging the hammer.

Ordinary work, and yet the workman impressed people as more than ordinary. He had a grave, thoughtful air, as of one given to the contemplation of great subjects. Nazareth saw him passing into the home of his mother Mary at night, passing out in the morning, ever kind and considerate and loving, ready for service like other sons of Nazareth, and yet somehow how much he seemed above them!

One day there came by caravan or solitary pilgrim, passing through the hills about Nazareth, a story that John, the cousin of Jesus, long a strange man, had burst out of the wilderness beyond Jordan, raising the cry, "Repent ye!"

People said of John, "A prophet, a prophet!" Great crowds flocked to hear him. Many lingered to follow John the Baptist into the waters of the Jordan.

One day Jesus was missed in the home of Mary, in the workshop of Joseph, in the streets of Nazareth. He was seen at the Jordan, he was baptized by John, and he too started out as a prophet to show great power as preacher, teacher, wonder-worker.

Strange, and yet he once walked these very ways of Nazareth, had his home on one of the streets climbing the hillslopes, worked here and there as carpenter, was just known as "Joseph's son!"

Strange, very!

Nazareth would like to see him. Nazareth would like to hear him. And O, if in Nazareth's streets he would work a miracle!

Strange, this "Joseph's son!"

Time goes on.

One day the peace of the Sabbath is on the hills and in the streets of Nazareth. No husbandman "sends his team afield." No hammer echoes about the homes or shops. Business is stilled in the market place. The birds seem to sing their softer notes. People are on their way to the synagogue, moving quietly, and yet more intently than usual. And why so many? Ben Issachar stays at home when he sees a cloud coming, but stays not to-day. Miriam, mother in Israel, keeps back her foot from the synagogue if she thinks she is likely to run into a big dewdrop. To-day Ben Issachar and Miriam under a clouded sky, maybe, hurry to the synagogue.

Anything, any person, unusual expected at the synagogue? It would seem so.

For some reason there is a crowd in the synagogue.

The services are opened.

In its appointed place comes the reading of the

law. A venerable scroll is brought out. It is one of the holy books. It is handed to the person rising to receive it, and who is the reader? Immediately he attracts every eye. What a serious while compassionate face he has! How kingly his air, and yet how brotherly! His voice is impressive while tender, and yet full of sympathy, making you think of rich bell notes with soft, deep cadences.

Everybody leans forward to see. All listen eagerly, while those who hear with difficulty are making trumpets of their hands and holding them up to their ears.

The old-time scroll is opened.

It is the Book of Isaiah, who on the distant, shadowy hilltops of prophecy saw Messiah's bright day.

The strange reader in his commanding yet sympathetic way begins:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me!"

What beautiful pictures he makes as he proceeds:

"Because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor."

What pictures come before you!

You see a great crowd of people who may not often come to the synagogue—homeless tramps, slaves, poor fishermen, lepers—and they listen to one bringing the Gospel free as the water from Nazareth's springs.

"He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted."

You see some mother bowing over her dead son, and lo, he comes who raises from the dead.

"To preach deliverance to the captives."

You see people in the bondage of a physical trial, insane folks in fetters, or in the servitude of a bad habit or a superstition, and lo, the breaker of chains draws nigh!

"And recovering of sight to the blind."

At the word of a great miracle-worker the veil of darkness falls away from those eyes long covered.

"To set at liberty them that are bruised."

What relief is given to those bruised through sickness or poverty, bruised through a false, hard conception of duty to God.

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

O see the trumpets lifted and hear them proclaiming the year of jubilee!

When this gracious reader has finished, when, amid the kindling faces all about him, he begins his comments, he says, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Why, you wonder, who is this?

People in the synagogue, too, are thinking. They turn to one another. They nod. You listen, and they whisper, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

What, Jesus who lived here once? "Joseph's son?"

You look at him and you see something else.

You think of a wonderful Jordan scene where Jesus is baptized in the restless river.

You see John's lifted eyes of wonder.

The Holy Spirit like a dove is descending.

God's solemn voice is heard in blessing.

"Joseph's son?"

It is the Son of God in Nazareth's synagogue today.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The synagogue had no altar, nor was any sacrifice offered in it; yet it had an order which suggested that of the temple. In both there was a chest at the far end containing the sacred law; the lid of the one as well as the other was called "the mercy seat;" and a veil hung before it. Here were "the chief seats" which the rich and the Pharisees loved to occupy. In the middle was a raised platform on which several persons could stand, with a pulpit for the Scripture reader. There was another chest for the sacred rolls of the prophets. There was a college of elders, one of whom was chief; he ruled the synagogue. Jesus stood up to read, and sat down to teach or preach. There was a chair near the pulpit, and to sit down in that chair was to assume the functions of preacher; the chapter was read standing. There was handed to him the roll of Isaiah by the deacon (chazan), whose duty was to keep these sacred writings and act as a sort of janitor or superintendent to get everything else in order for the service. He also acted as schoolmaster. There were always ten "men of leisure," whose duty it was to be on hand to make a congregation and take up the collection for the poor. Without ten persons present it was not a congregation.

There were two readings: one from the Pentateuch, the second from the prophets. The Pentateuch was commonly written on one long roll. Isaiah was probably in a roll by itself, as the other prophet volumes.

The chapter read is the lesson in the modern ritual appointed to be read on the Day of Atonement. In the calendar of modern Jews, Deuteronomy and Isaiah run parallel. Any reputable person of sufficient culture might be asked by the deacon to read the Scripture lesson; even strangers might officiate (verse 18). Isaiah's description of the "acceptable year of the Lord" was grounded on the ever present rhetoric of the year of jubilee, of liberty to slaves, release for debtors, and restoration of encumbered or forfeited estates. There could scarcely be named a period of history when such a message would be more acceptable. Slaves were unprotected; males and females were exposed to nameless cruelties compared with which death by being thrown to wild beasts would be mercy; the sick and old were turned out to perish; the poor which huddled in the crowded

cities received most heartless treatment. There were no hospitals, no almshouses; gifts to the poor were even held to be of questionable virtue. Rome had a population one half of whom were slaves, some in a modified form of bondage, but others were subjects of caprice. Flaminius ordered a slave killed to gratify a guest's curiosity; another fed his fish on the flesh of slaves killed for the purpose; Augustus crucified a slave for eating his favorite quail; old and infirm slaves were exposed to perish on an island of the Tiber. Slaves were chained as porters to doors. Roman ladies would tear the faces of their slaves; masters sometimes sold them for gladiators, or to combat with wild beasts. Lecky's *History of European Morals* abounds in descriptions of the cruelest customs of the Romans, and it is little cause of surprise that the people (verse 22) wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his (Christ's) mouth.

The Teachers' Meeting.

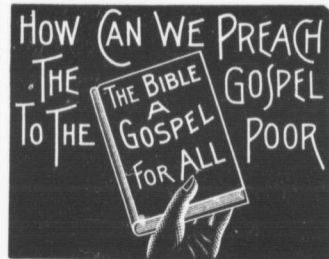
Draw outline map of Palestine, and trace Christ's probable journeys from the date of his temptation to this visit to Nazareth. Draw from the class all the facts known concerning the first year of Christ's public ministry. Five notable incidents are given in the first four chapters of St. John.... Trace the geographical relation of Capernaum to Nazareth, and Jesus's connection with both towns.... His probable companion on this occasion.... Make a careful study of the ancient synagogue—the curtained ark, the sacred rolls, the congregation facing the holy temple, the lattice work, descriptions of its ministers and its services.... Word-picture of this scene: The reaction of sentiment of the villagers on Jesus's return after a year's absence. Give causes for their disposition to reject him now.... Christ as a preacher: (1) Hissermon was based on the Bible; (2) Eloquent and gracious; (3) Pointed and personal; (4) Full of sympathy and hope; (5) Aggressive against evil; (6) Plainly indicated the universal scope of his mission.... The consequences of this sermon: (1) Jesus is cast out of the synagogue; (2) Probably his family was compelled to remove from the town; (3) Nazareth is registered in opposition to the Lord's mission; (4) Christ's miracle-working power is limited by their skepticism; (5) The truth, a blessing which illuminated all that was real in those days, is forever shut out of Nazareth.... Personal application. Where is Christ preaching such sermons now? Where are such congregations as this of Nazareth to-day to be found? Who are rejecting Jesus as the Nazarenes rejected him?

References.

FREEMAN. (With connecting verses.) Ver. 4: Bread resembling stones, 647. Ver. 9: The pinnacle of the temple, 655. Ver. 16: Public Scripture reading, 755. Ver. 17: Parchment rolls, 511; books

of prophecy, 756. Ver. 20: The *chazan*, or "minister;" posture of teachers, 757. Ver. 44: The synagogue, 636.

Blackboard.



A MESSAGE OF MERCY.

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.

HEALING, DELIVERANCE, SIGHT, LIBERTY, BROKEN-HEARTED, BOUND, BLIND, RUINED.

PROCLAIMING JOY TO ALL THE WORLD.

A PREACHER OF POWER. THE SON OF MAN.

AN OINTED WITH THE POWER. ANNOUNCING THE PROMISES.

"All wondered at the gracious words."

GO THOU PRAY FOR POWER. PROCLAIM THE PROMISES.

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 16, 17, 20, 22. *Attentive listeners.* 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 Shekinah; it was the beauty of holiness; it was the peace of God.—*Farrar.*

Verses 18 and 19. The American must go abroad to the peasantry of Russia or India or China to get any conception of the mental and moral hopelessness of the common people in the provinces of the Roman empire in the first century. The message of Christ to this people was a message of hope. Glad tidings to the poor which meant better opportunities, a larger distribution of wealth, more universal comfort. Comfort to the broken-hearted—hope at the open grave, flowers for escape, and the smile of anticipated meeting mingled with the tears of present separation. Deliverance to the captives—the translation of government from a military to an industrial and social organization. Recovery of sight to the blind—hospitals, asylums for the unfortunate, and for the mentally blind universal systems of public education. Liberty for body, soul, and spirit. This was Christ's mission which he fulfilled while he lived, and left to his followers as their heritage.—*Lyman Abbott.*

As the restored health of his patients is a better argument of skill in a physician than labored examinations and certificates; as the testimony of the almanac that summer comes with June is not so convincing as is the coming of summer itself in the sky, in the air, in the fields, on hill and mountain; so the power of Christ's Gospel in the world is the best evidence of its divine origin. What blessed changes does it work in the world's history!—*Beecher.*

Verses 22. "Is not this Joseph's son?" It is not from castles so much as cabins, from princes so much as from the people, that reformers and patriots spring. Luther came out of a miner's hut; and while the German boy sang in the streets for his bread, John Knox earned his by teaching. Wallace and William Tell, Hampden and George Washington embarked in the cause of freedom with little else but their lives to lose. The noblest sacrifices of piety and patriotism have been made by such as had not a drop of noble blood in their veins. Scotland's history illustrates this. Her middle class and peasantry dyed scaffolds in blood and kept her banner flying till liberties civil and sacred were secured.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Safely through another week,
Come, said Jesus' sacred voice,
Jesus is tenderly calling thee,
I heard the voice of Jesus,
I was a wandering sheep.

No. 2.

Art thou weary?
Hail, to the Lord's anointed,
How sweetly sounds the call,
O what amazing words of grace,
Ho was not willing.

The Naturalist in Palestine.

There is no country in the world which presents such a unique field for the naturalist. In Palestine we have gathered, focused in one little narrow corner, specimens from every part of the whole world. In fact, when we are in one part of Palestine we find ourselves in an Alpine region, and in another part we find ourselves in a tropical outlier, in the Jordan valley. The fact is that there is no spot in the world that I am aware of where you can bring together so closely the animals, the birds, the insects, the land shells, and the plants of the far north, of the tropic, and what we call the Germanic region—the temperate zone. The reason of it is this: Palestine, in the first place, possesses lofty mountains. The peaks, which reach about 10,000 feet in height, are covered with all but perpetual snow. I have waded through snow on the top of Mount Hermon in the middle of August. From these two mountain ranges, the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or Hermon, which are a spitting of the great Syrian range which comes down from the gates of Syria, you have first a long range, gradually diminishing in elevation, but flattening and broadening out, which forms in succession the Highlands of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Then, on the other side, you have Mount Hermon running down into Bashan and flattening out again, while the prolongation of Lebanon is lost in the plateau of the Tih, as it is called.

Between these two ranges you have a phenomenon unique on the earth's surface. You have a deep fissure, a rent, the surface of which is about 1,300 feet below the level of the sea, known in the Hebrew as Ciccar, by the natives as the Gior, and by ourselves as the Jordan valley. You find a tropical climate all around the Red Sea and in the lower Jordan valley. The result is, while I am standing under Banias, at Tell Kadi, the ancient Laish, or Dan, I can look up and see the snow-clad top of Hermon, with its bears and Alpine plants and birds. I am standing about 200 feet below the level of the sea, with papyrus waving round me. I look down into the Jordan valley, into a region peopled by semi-tropical plants and animals, while in the middle of the whole country and in the plains are what are called the German fauna and flora, that is the same as in the Mediterranean countries.—*Charles Tristram, in the Natural History of Palestine.*

PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

A Happy New Year.

A HAPPY New Year, and a happy all the year, to every primary worker!

What more delightful work can there be than to lead and teach the little children whom Jesus, the great Teacher, loved and blessed! And how glad and grateful ought we to be for the great opportunity given us of sowing in the virgin soil.

"Unto me sweet childhood looketh" is a joy and an inspiration to every true heart.

May the great Teacher through all the work of the coming year stand by the side of each worker, to give the love and wisdom which he so earnestly desires to impart!

Illustrative Teaching in the Primary Department.

BY GEORGE W. PEASE.

No. 2. *Object Illustrations.*

OBJECT illustrations, like other kinds of illustrations, are useful to impress, clarify, or condense the truth.

If our purpose in using certain objects in our lesson work is to impress or clarify the truth of the lesson, we should bear in mind certain rules, else we may fail of accomplishing that purpose, and only succeed in attracting and interesting the children. The first rule we will call the

RULE OF SELECTION. Choose as simple an object as possible, that the truth may not be hidden nor obscured by the great attractiveness of that which is chosen merely for an illustration. The attention of the children may be attracted and held by very simple, common objects, and by the use of such objects the truth may be impressed the more deeply from the fact that the child's attention may be easily turned from the simple, well-known object to the truth itself. The lesson will be impressed by pointing out to the child the analogy between the particular quality or qualities of the chosen object and the truth to be taught. For example, the power of habit can be easily but impressively illustrated by the use of a piece of cotton thread, which is wound round and round the child's hands. If wrapped around but once, it can be easily broken; if wound around several times, there is more difficulty in breaking it; if wound around many times, the child will be unable to break it. Point out to the child the

analogy between this illustration and the gradual strengthening of the hold which a certain action has upon us, brought about by a continued repetition of that action. The continued repetition of that action is like the continued wrapping around of strand after strand of the cotton thread upon the child's hand. The seeing of this analogy will attract and interest the children, and impress the truth of the power of habit more deeply, perhaps, because of the simplicity of the object used. If the object is very attractive, the interest is apt to center in it and the thoughts remain upon it after the teacher has laid it aside and is speaking of the lesson which she intended to illustrate. Our second rule we call the

RULE OF USE. Object illustrations when used too frequently lose their power of attracting and holding the attention. We should always illustrate the truth of the lesson to the children, but should use various kinds of illustrations, such as blackboard work, objects, stories, pictures, etc., so as not to fail of impressing truth through a lack of interest on the child's part, brought about by the too frequent use of one kind of illustrative work. Our third rule we call the

RULE OF METHOD. The chosen object should be held up to the scholars and questions asked, these questions being so shaped as to bring out in the scholars' answers the particular quality or qualities of the objects which are to be used for the illustration.

When these qualities are clearly seen by the scholars then point out the analogy, after which remove the object from sight, that it may no longer attract the children's attention.

Again, we must bear in mind one more rule, the **RULE OF ADAPTABILITY.** Use that object which best lends itself to the truth and the class. We may have several objects, each of which would illustrate the truth. From among these objects we should choose that one which most easily illustrates the lesson. In our choice we must keep in mind the scholars whom we teach, and select that which is best adapted to them. We may have several objects which would serve to illustrate the lesson of the resurrection, but we might select from among these one to use in illustrating the lesson to an adult class very different from that one which we would select to illustrate

the same lesson to a primary class. In every case we should choose that which, in our judgment, the most easily and impressively illustrates that truth to that class. Study the methods of Jesus, and see how wonderfully he adapted his illustrations to the conditions of his hearers.

In closing let me offer a few cautions and suggestions:

1. The truth, not the object, is the subject of the hour. Learn about the truth, not about the illustration used.
2. As far as possible, use your own object illustrations.
3. Turn the attention of the children as soon as possible from the object to the truth.
4. Be sure your object really illustrates what you wish it to, and take care to avoid disappointment in material.
5. Practice beforehand any work requiring manipulation.

Primary Teachers' Unions.

A DIFFICULTY REMOVED.

In many places there is no teacher who feels she is enough of "a leader" to take charge of a union. This difficulty is overcome by electing a board of directors or vice presidents chosen from the several denominations. These officers alternate in assisting or relieving the president in conducting the regular meetings of the class. Several unions have four vice presidents, each one having charge of a meeting once a month.

A USEFUL OFFICER.

It is very helpful to have a librarian who will take charge of samples of all helps to be shown teachers. Thus at one session teachers' lesson helps may be shown; at another, children's lesson papers and cards, concert exercises, song books, library books, certificates, etc., each in turn, or all together if preferred.

THE LOOKOUT COMMITTEE.

Many plans laid out for the year are unfinished and many tasks incomplete. What shall we do? Better almost anything than the waste of time in laments and regrets, unless it shall lead us into better living for the coming year. Regretting is a good exercise *only* when it begets a thorough repentance, followed by a resolution to live a higher and nobler life.

THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE.

In some unions this committee arranges a list of topics to be taken up during general exercises

The following list was used at St. Louis. The subject may be presented by one selected long enough in advance to make good preparation, and discussed by members present, if time permit. If preferred, selections from Sunday school periodicals may be read with profit.

The primary class room and its equipment; what tools are essential?

Should the primary class meet with the main school? If so, when?

Are divided classes desirable? and how should subteachers be selected and trained?

How to promote punctual and regular attendance.

Opening exercises.

Closing exercises.

Should the child study the lesson before or after it is taught in the class?

Should the Golden Text be memorized at home?

Singing in the primary class: the what and the how.

Devotional exercises, and how to teach children to pray.

How to teach benevolence in the primary class.

The use of the blackboard.

The use of emblems and symbols.

Supplementary lessons.

Should denominational differences be taught in the primary class?

The teacher's preparation.

The birthday box and its advantages.

Discipline in the primary class.

What should be the conditions of promotion?

How to reach the mothers of the little ones.

An ideal primary class.

Teaching Mistakes.

I. MISTAKES OF EXAMPLE.

1. To attempt to teach a class the way of life without personal, *experimental knowledge* of it for oneself. It is the blind leading the blind.

2. To live a *worldly life*, that leads the scholar, as he sees its inconsistencies, to conclude that all religious profession is a mere outward show.

3. To indulge in *questionable pleasures*, such as card playing, dancing, theatre going, and thus to imperil the spiritual life of one's scholars, who are quick to follow the steps of their teacher.

4. To speak in *doubt* or *irreverence* toward any portion of God's Word, his ministers, or the Church. If a Sunday-school teacher has doubts, let him keep them to himself.

5. To mix with the teaching of the things of God *levity* and *flippancy* of speech. There is an increasing tendency toward such unseemliness, both in the pulpit and the pew.

II. MISTAKES IN PREPARATION.

1. To *put off* to the last day and hour of the week the study of next Sunday's lesson, and then to trust to some sort of inspiration in teaching it.

2. To *neglect the Bible* in his lesson study, and unduly magnify the teaching "helps" by depending upon the thought and study of others.

3. To have no plan of *systematic Bible study* for one's leisure hours, and thus never to become "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

4. To study and to teach *without special prayer* for the divine blessing, and without trying faithfully, as time will allow, to get a personal knowledge from one's scholars.

5. To neglect the *teachers' meeting*, the very best place of all for sharpening the teacher's wits, and showing him how to teach a lesson.

III. MISTAKES IN MANAGING.

1. To come *tardy* to school, and to let the spirit of mischief and idleness preoccupy the minds of his scholars in advance of his coming.

2. To *stay away* from his class for any thing less than providential reasons, and perhaps undo in one week the good work of months.

3. To *allow disorder and idleness* in his class, under the plea that if he tries to keep good order his scholars will leave him. The *growing* class or school is always the class or school that is orderly.

4. To *neglect the dull and slow scholars* of his class, and give the place of honor and work to the bright scholars, who need but little of his care and encouragement.

5. To *neglect the training* of his scholars in the practical duties of the Christian life, such as Church attendance, home Bible reading, prayer, etc.

6. To fail to *follow up every absence* persistently and lovingly, and to form the *habit* of being in his place on the Sabbath day.

IV. MISTAKES OF INSTRUCTION.

1. To do *all the talking* of the half hour, and fail to use the time in drawing out the scholars.

2. To ask *questions* of a few bright or favored one-, and to neglect to question every scholar in every lesson.

3. To *consume time* "reading the lesson round," instead of at once beginning the teaching.

4. Teaching the *little things* of the lesson and leaving no time for the personal application of the great spiritual truths which it contains.

For the Good of the Work.

BY MRS. W. F. CRAFTS.

"SHOULD a primary teacher hold her class indefinitely?" was a query put into a question box at a convention by a mother who was greatly afflicted by the fact that her little child had to attend a class taught by an elderly lady, who had been in charge of the primary department for twenty-five years. The long continuance of the teacher would not have been objectionable if she had not been content, and not only so, but firmly fixed, in teaching just as she did when she first took charge of the class; that is, each Sabbath she called the roll, heard the verses, asked, "Who was the first man?" "Who was the first woman?" "Who was the first murderer?" "Who was the oldest man?" etc. When urged to take up the international lessons, and teach them according to kindergarten methods, she had replied, with rather a good-natured sniff, "La sakes! I can't teach such nonsense."

The superintendent, who was a man thoroughly in sympathy with advanced methods, would have liked to ask her to resign. But he did not dare to suggest it, because she was a sister well beloved in the church.

Many mothers whose little children went to kindergartens through the week, and were made "much happy" there, kept their darlings at home on the Sabbath, rather than have them go to a class which was in such contrast to the kindergarten, and so the primary class was much smaller than it should have been.

No wonder that anxious mother dropped the query into the question box, hoping to get some solution for the difficulty. She listened eagerly as the questions one by one were answered; at last hers was reached, and this is the answer that was given: "A primary teacher who is progress-

ive in methods may be continued indefinitely, but one who will not grow in teaching should be retired—the eternal welfare of the little children demands it. It may be done in several ways: first, by a frank statement of the case if the primary teacher has grace to bear it; second, by asking that the lesson shall be taught by another person, while the old teacher continues in charge of the management of the class; third, by organizing a kindergarten department below the primary."

It is no light matter to separate persons from a work in which they have been long engaged. "But what keeps them in it?" is the question to be considered; is it force of habit, or is it real love for the work? If it is the former, the sooner the tie is cut the better; if it is because of love for the work, there should be a glad assent to pass it over to persons more competent.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS. FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON I. (January 5.)

THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST. Luke 1. 5-17.

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

Primary Notes.

BY MRS. J. H. POLHEMUS.



[Print "Forerunner" on the board.] I once read a story of a beautiful house that for a long time had been shut up; no one lived in it, and the people to whom it belonged were in another country. At last a

gentleman came to stay in the house, and soon the doors and windows were thrown open, servants were seen cleaning and putting everything in order. The gentleman told what was to be done and saw that everything was prepared and ready for whom? For the family who were coming. This gentleman came before to prepare or make ready for those who would come; we might call him a forerunner, which means one who goes before.

Many years ago, when a king was going on a journey, men were sent before to prepare the way. These men would make the roads wide and smooth, would cut down even the hills that stood in the way, and fill up the valleys that the road might be level; every one who saw these men work knew that the king was coming. They were the king's forerunners, because they went before to prepare the king's ways.

You remember in our review lesson we talked

about three kings. Who were they? For the next six months we are to study the story of King Jesus as told by one of his dear friends named Luke; the story of how he left his heavenly home to come and live here?

Let us make a picture of the world. [Draw or uncover a globe.] What was the name of that part of the world to which Jesus came? [Outline Palestine on the globe.] In the same country where Saul lived, and in the same city where Ruth and David had their homes, Jesus was born. What city was it? We have just had the beautiful Christmas lesson that told how the Christ [print] child was born in Bethlehem.

Do you suppose Christ had a forerunner, some one sent before to prepare his ways? Yes, he had. Long years before he was born one of the prophets said these words. [Read Mal. 3. 1, first clause.] You will want to know his name, so we will print it over "forerunner." [Print "John."] Today we must learn all we can about John, so that we may better understand the lesson that tells us how he prepared the way for Christ.

There is a wonderful story in the Bible of what happened to John's father and mother before he was born. [Tell the events in Luke 1. 5-23.] While their parents were waiting in their home for the baby John to be born, in the village of Nazareth an angel came to Mary, who was Elisabeth's cousin, and told her that she too should have a baby boy, whose name should be Jesus; he told her how her cousin Elisabeth was to have a little boy, and this news made Mary leave her home and go to visit Elisabeth. I can imagine how these two talked of the angels they had seen and of the babies who were coming so soon.

The days went by, and at last the baby John was born. [Tell the events found in verses 53-66.] I suppose this baby looked like the babies who come into your homes, but this baby was to grow up to do a wonderful work; his Father was told about it. The Bible says the Holy Ghost made Zacharias able to see and tell of what would happen; he told how Jesus was coming, and he said of John that he should "go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." For what did John come? To prepare his ways. [Print "came" on the right side of the globe and "to prepare," etc., on the left.] How John did this we will learn another Sunday.

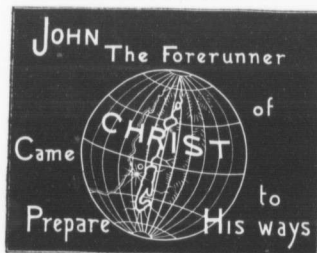
Zacharias said that Jesus was coming "to give light to those that sit in darkness and . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace," and this makes me think that if Jesus was like the sun, that lightens the whole world, John was like a torch, shining in the small place where he lived, and showing the way for others to find the true Light.

[Show a torch made of brown paper, with the end colored red, and ask the children to make one at home and print John's name on it.]

Jesus still needs to have those who, like John, will prepare the way for him. Wouldn't you like to be a torch shining in your own place, shining because Jesus has shed the light of his love in your heart, so you know how to show others the way to find him? Will you try this week to lead some one to Jesus?

Sing, "Jesus bids us shine."

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING. Globe, brown; title and map of Palestine on globe, white; "Came to prepare his ways," green.



Kindergarten Hints.

BY MARY J. CHISHOLM FOSTER.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. The Forerunner of Christ. Luke 1. 60-64, 76, 79, 80.

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

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Luke 1. 5-17; *Life of Christ* (Geikie), chapter 7; *The Temple* (Edersheim), "Morning and Evening Sacrifice;" *Sermon* (Dr. Payson), vol. iii; *The Oratorio, Woman of Samaria* (Bennett), "And blessed, blessed be the Lord God of Israel," choruses 3 and 22; *The Voice in Speech and Song* (Schmank).

ATTENTION STORY.

It was a very beautiful song of praise that we read together last Sunday, and you remember we have talked of some of the men who loved God and believed that he would send Jesus into this world to show us how to be good. They all lived before the little baby Jesus came to this earth that night at Bethlehem, and many sweet songs of praise these men had sung, telling of the coming of Jesus.

Our story for to-day is about a forerunner of Jesus, which means a messenger to tell the people that he was coming. This man's name was John, and once he was a baby, too, just as all who are men now were little babies once.

The neighbors came in to see that baby, and they said that they would like him named for his father. Now his father's name was a long name, hard to speak; it was Zacharias, and his mother's name was Elisabeth. Do any of you know some one of that name? She said, "No, we will not call

him Zacharias, but John." Then the neighbors said, "Why, none of his uncles or cousins are named this name," and they asked the father what the name should be? Then he wrote this: "His name is John," and the people were surprised. This name means "a gift of God."

His father then told all the people that this child was to go before Jesus, the Lord, and to prepare his way, telling the people that he was coming to give light and peace.

The little child John grew strong, and lived in the desert until he was a man. How he must have liked outdoor life!

Let us read the story from this book which has so many wonderful stories in it. [Read Luke 1. 60-63.]

Explain unusual words: "Kindred," "marveled," "prophet," "shadow," "guide," "waxed," "deserts."

OUTLINE.

Sunday. Attention Story, Bible lesson, and Golden Text.

Monday. Talk of the kindly interest neighbors have in each other, and explain the beauty of family life. Get the children interested in expressing themselves as to neighborly kindnesses being only one step beyond service given to each other in the family.

Tuesday. The teacher may lead the thought of the children to the next step of community interest which is found in the church. The old people, the young people, and the little children all like to go to church together. Ever since King David made the beautiful hymns about worship and praise in God's house, people have sung hymns of joy there.

Wednesday. Talk of the interest the neighbors, and especially the father and mother, had in naming this baby. The father and mother chose the name which means "a gift of God." Let all the families thank God for the gift of the baby to them. Have you a baby in your home? Do you love him much?

Thursday. The father knew that it would be the work of this baby, when he became a man, to prepare the people to welcome Jesus as the one to be their great Teacher and Saviour. Each one of you little boys and girls has a work to do in this world.

Friday. Talk of the light as a symbol of Jesus who was to be the Guide. Talk also of bravery and earnestness as qualities of a strong spirit.

NATURE WORK. Talk of the tongue in speech and taste. John's father had not been able to speak for a long time, but at last he spoke and praised God. Let the teacher dwell upon the wonderful power of speech which man has, and of this superiority over the brute creation. Talk of the tongue, of its possibilities and powers. "A wholesome tongue is the tree of life" (Prov. 15. 4).

ART WORK. Show and explain the lesson card, which is Overbeck's picture of the naming of John. Let the children talk about it.

HAND WORK. The kindergarten children may write the words, "His name is John," and they may make a temple or a church with the building blocks.

The **TRANSITION CLASS** may sew the words which are under the picture.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER. Talk of the human voice. The tongue and the lips give utterance to the thoughts of the mind. The gentle voice of the mother in the home is like the sweetest music to the household, and teaches all to speak kindly. Animals have voice, but they do not have speech. One poet speaks of the voice as a fountain: "Let the voice rise like a fountain" (Tennyson). A good prophet once spoke of the glory of God, and brightness coming from the East, and of a beautiful Voice which was like the noise of many waters (Ezek. 43. 2).

LESSON II. (January 12.)

THE BOY JESUS. Luke 2. 40-52.

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

Primary Notes.



[Show an apple seed.] Suppose this seed was planted, what would it do? Tell me how it would grow? What would happen first? [Describe the growth of a tree, telling how the roots go down into the ground, tak-

ing in nourishment from the earth, that the tree may grow up strong, bearing leaves and fruit. While telling, either make a tree on the board or show one already made.]

Suppose you should plant an apple seed, what would you expect and want the tree to be that would grow from it? I think you would be disappointed in it unless it grew strong. [Print "grew" on the trunk of the tree, and "strong" among the roots.] Unless it was strong it could not stand the winds and storms that would beat against it; unless it was strong it would not bear good fruit, so I am sure you would want your tree to be strong, and most of all to be "fruitful." [Print among the branches.]

Tell me what else grows beside the trees. [Draw from the children different things.] Everything that has "life" grows—trees and plants and animals and people. In some ways all these different things grow alike; everything that grows rightly will grow "strong," and almost everything that grows strong and well will be "fruitful." Let us

talk for a few minutes about a baby. Who ever saw a baby a week old? Tell me about it. [Describe how a baby at first is helpless; picture how a healthy baby will grow and the changes that come with the months; tell how a child should not only grow strong in body, but should increase or grow in knowledge and goodness; should daily grow more loving and kind. These things are to a child what the fruit is to the tree.]

Can you think of a baby you have heard of who grew in this true, best way? [Print "Jesus."] We learned about him first as a little baby, just such a dear baby as many of you have in your homes; but at his birth, you remember, some wonderful things happened, different from anything that ever happened when our little brothers or sisters were born. [Review briefly Luke 2. 1-39; Matt. 2. 1-15, 19-21.]

What do you suppose Jesus was doing while he was in Egypt? Just what your baby does in your home, growing. How? Strong in body and mind, taller and larger in every way, so that when Joseph and Mary left Egypt and came back to Palestine they brought with them a baby that was already growing into a big boy. Let us find on the map where Jesus went to live. [Point out Nazareth and tell a little about the place.] Here in the village of Nazareth the boy Jesus spent nearly all his life. [Print "The Boy."]

The Bible tells a little about those years. Listen while I read something very beautiful that it says about him. [Read verse 40, then tell of the journey to Jerusalem (41-50).] Jesus did not ask to stay in Jerusalem, where he could have gone often and talked with these wise men; no, he went back to Nazareth with his parents very willingly, and the Bible says, "He was subject to them." That means he obeyed them, doing everything he could to please and make them happy.

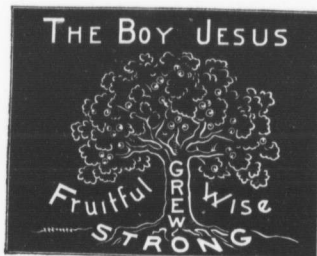
Does anyone know Joseph's business? He was a carpenter, and I can imagine how Jesus spent many days in the little shop learning to make the things that carpenters make, and in this way he grew helpful and increased in knowledge. Did he grow in any other ways? [Repeat the Golden Text.] He grew not only strong and large, but wise [print]. His mind was filled with heavenly wisdom, and besides he grew so loving and kind and beautiful in all his ways that the Bible says, "He pleased both God and man." That shows he was "fruitful."

I have made a little saw out of paper, and I want you to make one at home, as nearly like it as you can, to remind you of the time when Jesus was a boy and worked in a carpenter's shop. I want you to print on it some way in which you think Jesus grew while he was a boy in Nazareth.

Do you think we can grow as Jesus did? I know a child who is so faithful in her work, so generous kind, and loving in all her ways, that everyone

knows she is trying to grow like Jesus. Jesus did not think, because he might not stay in Jerusalem, he could not grow wise and fruitful; no, he grew in these ways just in the quiet home and shop at Nazareth, and so can you. Will you be like him? Sing, "Jesus once was a little child."

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING. Tree, brown; leaves, green; fruit, red; title and "grew," white; "strong," orange; "wise," green; "fruitful," red.



Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. The Boy Jesus. Luke 2. 40-52.

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

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Isa. 11; *Person of Christ* (Frederick Brooks), "The Epiphany of Childhood"; *The Religion of Present and Future* (Sermon Woolsey), "The Early Years of Christ"; *Sermons* of F. W. Robertson (second series), "The Early Development of Jesus"; *Popular Science Monthly* for September, 1895; *Fruit as a Food and Medicine* (Benjulfeld).

ATTENTION STORY.

While John was living out of doors in the desert, Jesus was living with his parents in a very pretty little town called Nazareth. That place was as if in a basin, and seemed like a field rich in fruits. Around it were fifteen mountains, and in it were small gardens with hedges or fences of pear trees, and inside the gardens many fig trees grew. The houses were small and made of stone, and all the roofs were flat.

When Jesus was a little child he grew strong and brave and wise. He loved his parents and his home. God loved him and cared for him. In that country when little boys were three years old their mothers put upon them a garment with a border around it, and on this was a blue ribbon and a fringe (Num. 15. 38). This fringe was a sign to remind them of God and of his word, and their mothers were their first teachers.

When they were five years old they began to learn lessons and the Psalms, and then they went to school.

Once every year the parents of Jesus took a journey to Jerusalem, and they went to the temple to worship. When Jesus was twelve years old he went with them.

Perhaps this was the second time he had been away with them, for when he was a very small boy they took him on a journey to Egypt. When he went to Jerusalem he was old enough to notice things and enjoy them as he traveled on toward the Holy City.

For eighty years there had been good schools, and this little boy had been learning his lessons well. We would be very glad if this book said something about his school life, but we are glad that it tells us he went to the temple, which was his church.

When the people were getting ready to go home from the temple, Jesus was so busy talking with men who listened to his beautiful words that the father and mother started home without him. They thought he was coming with some of their friends.

After they had been going toward home for a whole day they began to inquire for him, and not finding him they went back to look for him, and there he was in the temple. Just as soon as they found him he went home with them. Let us read about it. [Read Luke 2. 40-52.]

Explain unusual words: "Waxed," "custom," "fulfilled," "turned," "kinsfolk," "acquaintance," "amazed."

OUTLINE.

Sunday. Attention Story, Bible lesson, and Golden Text.

Monday. Talk of the love for God's house, the church, and of families going there together to worship. The Bible often speaks of families and households serving God.

Tuesday. The children may be instructed as to reverence for what is beneath them, and for what is on their level. (See *Kindergarten of the Church*, page 174, the development of Goethe's idea.) Reverence should be distinctly taught.

Wednesday. Impress a lesson of obedience to parents. Jesus loved and helped his parents.

Thursday. Continue the lesson of Wednesday, and let the children express themselves as to filial love shown in helpfulness. What service will show our love? There are little ways even for the children to do this.

Friday. Talk of the Golden Text. This story says that Jesus grew strong in mind, that means in wisdom. It tells us that he obeyed that commandment which he gave to his disciples afterward, when he told them to love God with the mind, strength, and heart.

NATURE WORK. Study mountains, valleys, and fruits.

ART WORK. Show some large picture of mountains.

HAND WORK. The kindergarten children may model houses in clay or sand.

THE TRANSITION CLASS may tint the picture delicately and color the word under it with crayons.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER. Talk of the out-

door life of children, and of the health and the strength of the body which comes to them in the freedom of life in the fresh air.

The outdoor life of the boy Jesus must have given great pleasure to him as he played among the hills of Nazareth. As there was much fruit there, he must have eaten this, and this helped to strengthen his body.

Fruit is better food than meat for children, as meat causes them to be fretful and irritable.

Jesus was so gentle and loving toward others that they loved him, and each little child may follow his example of patience and gentleness, and may have favor with God.

This means that the inner, or inside, life of the thoughts may be so pure and so good that when God sees our thoughts they are pleasing to him.

Jesus obeyed that commandment which was written in God's book long before that time—the commandment about obeying parents.

Let us repeat it: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

For he is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day like us he grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew.
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love.
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he has gone.

—Hymns of the Faith.

LESSON III. (January 19.)

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Luke 3. 15-22.

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

Primary Notes.



Dear children, I want you to forget for a little while where you are; try not to see the walls and windows that are around you, nor the boys and girls that your eyes really are looking at, but try and see with the eyes of your mind what I am going to tell you about.

Now we are a long way from home; we are in a beautiful country where there are many trees and much grass. I don't see any houses, but just over

yonder there is a river; it is quite wide, and at this place it is quiet like a lake. But if there are not houses here, there are people. See! they are coming from every direction, some alone, some with two or three friends, some in great companies; such a variety of people! Soldiers, men in long coats and turbans on their heads, women, and children, all going toward one spot by the river bank. See that crowd of people standing by the river! They are all listening; can you see to whom? I see a strange looking man; his dress is made of rough cloth; a leather strap or girdle is fastened about his waist; he looks like no other man there, and his words seem to hold this crowd of people still. Who is this man?

Who was the baby we learned about two Sundays ago? That baby and this man are the same, John, the forerunner of whom? Thirty years have gone since the birth of John and Jesus; there are different rulers in Palestine and different priests in the great temple. Jesus, you know, has been growing up in quiet Nazareth, while John has been spending much time away from towns and cities in the lonely wilderness, where he could dress as we have just seen, in a strange way, and where his food has been locusts and wild honey. There in the wilderness God spoke to John and told him it was time for him to go out into the world and prepare the way for Christ, to let everyone know that Jesus was come to be the Saviour.

What would you think a good way to prepare for Jesus? Not by making the roads smooth and straight, as we learned was sometimes done? No, John was sent to prepare the hearts of the people for Christ's coming. What kind of hearts could best receive him? Those that were free from sin. And so John came with a message. While I tell you the message you can look at a picture of the river and trees on the board; we will put over so many little dots for the people, and this longer mark for John. [Tell briefly and simply John's message as found in Matt. 3. 2, 3; Luke 3. 3-14.]

The people who listened thought, because they had never heard any one speak like John, that perhaps he was Jesus, but John did not let them think so long; he said—[verses 15, 16]. Day after day John preached and baptized, till one day a Stranger stood among the crowd; a man, yet different from any who were there. John knew who it was, and when the Stranger stepped up and asked to be baptized, he said—[Matt. 3. 14]; but Jesus wanted to be made just like us and do those things that we must do, so he told John to baptize him, and John obeyed.

[Describe the baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit, uncovering a picture of a dove and printing "The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus." You and I know why Jesus left Nazareth; we know the work he began when he was

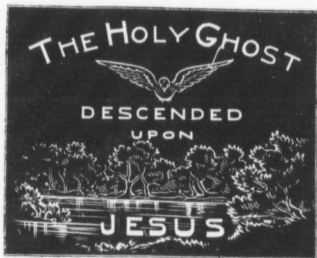
baptized. What was it? Jesus knew that all the people who lived in the world then, or should ever live here, would have sinful hearts, just as these had to whom John preached, and that he was come that the sins of the whole world might be forgiven.

One day when John was preaching he saw Jesus walking near; God had taught John what Jesus had come to do, and so he said to those standing by the words of our Golden Text. [Repent.]

If John could walk into this schoolroom to-day, I am sure he might preach the same sermon to us; he could tell us to repent or be truly sorry for sin, and he could point us to Jesus and say, "Behold the," etc. I want you, at home, to make a heart like this [show a pattern], and if you think you have sins to be forgiven, print "sin" on it; then, if you are truly sorry and want to be forgiven, ask Jesus to do so, and after you have done this take a red pencil and mark off the word sin on the heart, to remind you how Jesus's blood will take your sin away.

Sing third verse of "Beautiful land, holy land," Mrs. Kennedy's *Special Songs and Services*, page 66.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING. River, blue; trees and grass, green; dove and all the words, white.



Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. The Ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 3. 15-22.

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

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Luke 3. 15-22; *Life of Christ* (Farrar), vol. i, page 104; *Sinai and Palestine* (Stanley), page 304; *Oratorio of the Messiah*, "He is like a refiner's fire;" "But who may abide the day of his coming."

ATTENTION STORY.

We have read in our lesson stories from God's word that both John, the messenger, and Jesus, the

One who was to teach the people, grew strong for their work. The man who wrote this was a doctor, and his name was Luke. He followed Jesus, and he loved him as a friend. It may be because he was a doctor that he was interested in the good care given to the bodies of children, and the thought of their growth, too, for he says the same of these two, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 1. 80; 2. 40). To-day let us talk about John, who was to tell the people to get ready to hear the wonderful words of Jesus, for he was going to teach them how to live, that they might be good and serve God by helping other people. All the time of their childhood they lived out of doors much of the time, and they took care of their bodies, having the good food and much exercise. When the time for work came they were ready and strong in body as well as spirit. At one time John was talking to the people, and he told them Jesus was coming to them very soon, and the next day he saw Jesus walking toward them, and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Then he said to all the people that this was the very One whom he said was before him. After this, the very next day, John stood with two men when Jesus came again, and John said just what he had said before, and the two men turned and "followed" Jesus. When Jesus saw them coming he asked them what they were looking for, and they called him Master and said, "Where do you live?" His kind voice said, "Come and see," and they went with him and stayed all day. Let us read about it here in the dear book which has given to us so many stories about Jesus.

[Read John 1. 29, 30, 35-40. Explain unusual words: "Preferred," "manifested," "Israel," "disciples," "rabbi," "dwellest," "abode."]

OUTLINE.

Sunday. Attention Story, Bible lesson, and Golden Text.

Monday. Interest the children still more in John by reading Matt. 3. 4 and talking of this: "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey."

Tuesday. Talk of the great message which he had been preparing to give, and now the time had come. Behold means "see!" for he wanted everybody to see Jesus.

Wednesday. Talk of what Jesus was to do. He was to take away sin, and show truth and goodness, to show how to be beautiful in life. He came to take away sin, and to give joy and gladness. This Bible says that such joy as he had and as he gives makes people strong. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Thursday. As soon as the two men standing with John heard the voice of Jesus they were glad to follow him. We hear his voice now, sometimes, speaking in loving tones; let us go to him quickly when he speaks, and stay with him.

Friday. Try to make clear to the children that Jesus will come and live with us. We cannot go to an earthly home with him and stay all day as these men did, but he will stay with us in our

earthly homes all day, and every day. His presence will bless every home if the fathers and mothers and children will follow him as gladly as these men did. We may follow him now by obeying his words.

NATURE WORK. Tell stories of bees and locusts, and talk of their habits.

ART WORK. Show pictures of bees and locusts, and whenever possible show something from the masters which may illustrate a point or description, but always show the best.

HAND WORK. In the kindergarten let the work be in the sand table. The river Jordan may be marked by drawing the finger irregularly through the sand.

Outline the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, then make a wilderness of cedar and fir twigs, pine cones, and rocks.

The **TRANSITION CLASS** will write the words of the Golden Text on the card, and bring it to show to their kindergartner next Sunday. They may use a colored pencil and choose the color they think beautiful.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER. There may be talks about bees, honey, hives, and comb or honey cells.

These bees in the wilderness did not have pretty little wooden houses all painted, and they were not owned by men; for their house was God's great, beautiful "out of doors," and their hives were the trees and rocks. The winds and storms and sunshine painted these hives beautiful shades of green and gray and other colors.

Curious facts about bees and locusts may be found not only in school books and natural history books, but in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. iii, pp. 484-503; vol. iv, pp. 765-767. These two insects will furnish nature topics enough for one week. It is said that Cicero and Pliny record that Aristomachus devoted sixty years to the study of bees.

LESSON IV. (January 26.)

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS. Luke 4. 14-22.

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

Primary Notes.



[Show a picture of a church; if possible, your own.] How many know what this is? What is it for? Who go here to worship God? When do you go? Do you think it is all right to go to church when you feel like it, and stay at home when you wish?

I have heard people say, "We never go to church

while we are on a vacation; we go away to rest, so we sit on the piazza, or take a walk, or lie in a hammock instead." What do you think of such a plan? Can you tell me any good reason why we should go to church whenever it is possible? I know a good many, but the one I want to give you to-day is, that Jesus taught us by his example that it was right to go to church on Sunday. You know part of his work on earth was to teach us how to live, by example, and this lesson about churchgoing was among the first lessons he taught.

After Jesus was baptized [review here if desired] he spent nearly six weeks in a desert, where Satan tempted him sorely. Do you suppose he yielded to the temptation? No; he was tempted that he might know just how we feel when tempted, and to show us how to be strong to say "no," and how to send Satan away. You might think after six such hard weeks he would come back among his friends tired and weak, but the Bible says—[read Luke 4. 14]. You remember how the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus [uncover picture of a dove]; and now this Spirit made him strong and full of power. He must have done and said wonderful things, for we read that all "round about" the people were talking of him; and when he taught in the synagogues or churches he was glorified or praised of all.

After you have been away from home a good while, where do you like to go? Jesus wanted to go home. Where was his home? I want you to listen very carefully while I read you a verse in our lesson [verse 10]. Did you notice where Jesus went? Do you think it was the first time he ever had been to the synagogue on the Sabbath? O, no; the Bible says it was his "custom" to go; that means he went every Sunday. [Now tell how it was customary for teachers to take part in the service, and how Jesus took the book and what he read.]

This was the first time Jesus had told the people plainly who he was; that he was the Messiah for whom they were watching. Though they said, "Isn't this Joseph's son," they could not help being moved by what he said, and our lesson says—[verse 22]. Yet in spite of this they became angry; hear what they did—[verses 29, 30]. Because he was God they could not hurt him till his time came; so, passing right through the angry crowd, he left Nazareth and went to Capernaum [point out on the map], and taught there on the Sabbaths. Here, as before, the people wondered at his teaching; they were astonished, and "His word was with power." [Print.] Why did they have power? Because he spoke with the power of the Holy Spirit.

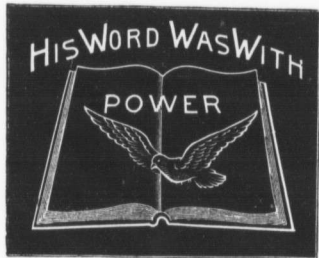
Don't you wish you could have heard him speak? Is there any way we can still hear his words? [Draw a book around the dove.] In the Bible we still have his words, and they have never

lost their power. Can you think why? Because every word was spoken by the power of the Spirit. Peter, talking about the first part of the Bible, said—[2 Peter 1. 21, Revised Version]. Because of this power God's word can do wonderful things even without a teacher.

Once in Mexico a man found a Bible; neither he nor the people around knew much about this book, and the whole village was very wicked. This man read the Bible first out of curiosity, but it had power over him, it made him see how full of sin he was, and how to be forgiven and live differently. He read the Bible to others, till the whole place was changed, and when a missionary happened to go there he found a Christian village. "His word was with power."

It has power to-day. Have you ever felt its power? I know you love many of Jesus's words; some have power to make you happy; others to make you sorry for sin; others to show you what to do [examples: Matt. 19. 14; Isa. 53. 5, 6; John 3. 16]. When you go home to-day, make a book like this one, print "Holy Bible" at the top, and some words of Jesus that you love very much on the pages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING. Book, brown, with red edges; "Spirit," dove, white; "His word," etc., light blue.



Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. The Early Ministry of Jesus. Luke 4. 16-21.

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

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Isa. 61. 1-3; *Education of Man* (Froebel), "Need of Soul Training;" *The Preacher and His Mode* (Stalker); *Imago Christi* (Stalker), pages 144-164.

ATTENTION STORY.

When Jesus became a man he preached to the people, and one Sunday he went into the synagogue or temple of Nazareth, which was the very church where he went many times when he was a boy, and he took up the Bible, which was like the

scroll upon your hand work card, and he read from the scroll. The words which he read were those spoken of himself by the good prophet Isaiah many years before, and they were wonderful words, telling of what he could do for the people. Everyone listened, and the words were like music to their ears. Jesus read that the poor were to hear God's word of peace and good will to men, and those who were in sorrow were to be comforted and their sad hearts were to be made glad. People who found it very hard to be good were to be helped, the blind were to be able to see, and all who had been hurt and bruised by naughtiness were to be made free and glad. When Jesus had read all this he closed the book and said, "This is all true, and I have come to do these things for you." Long, long ago Isaiah had written down this promise of God, and now, like all God's words, these had come to be true. They are in Luke 4. 16-21. Let us read them.

Explain unusual words: "Custom," "anointed," "deliverance," "captives," "acceptable," "fulfilled."

OUTLINE.

Sunday. Attention Story, Bible lesson, and Golden Text.

Monday. What does it mean to be poor? Many people who have not much money, nor many "things" do not think that they are poor, because they have much that is better than money and "things." They have the love of others, and they give love to others. None need be poor if they love and work and have the love of others. Let the teacher explain the benefits of love and labor.

Tuesday. Unloving words and naughty deeds cause hearts to be sad. Jesus came to bind up and to heal the breaking hearts by giving his great love to them. When we trust him sorrow is turned to joy.

Wednesday. Explain clearly that habits are like chains which bind people, but little children need not get chains and strings of bad habits upon them if they are obedient and loving and helpful.

Thursday. Jesus came to give sight to the blind, and he can help us too to see as with an inner light what is good and beautiful and true. He is the Light of the world, and he makes bright the pathway of each little child, and he gives, also, the light of knowledge within, so we may live good and true lives.

Friday. Sometimes people feel sore and sad in their thoughts, just as bruises on the body hurt them, but when people pray to God and love him and trust him the heart is made glad, as a man who has his liberty and is happy and free.

NATURE WORK. We have talked many times about flowers and animals in the wood and forest, and in these wintry days, while the buds and the grasses are sleeping in their little beds covered with the white snow, the animals of the forest are glad and warm. Our Golden Text says that "His word was with power," and this wonderful and

powerful word of God made all things, even the beasts of the forest. One of the animals is called a deer. Have you ever seen one? Now in the cold winter his hair is long and thick, and it is grayish brown, but in summer it was shorter and reddish brown in color. He can run very fast. He has antlers, or pretty and sharp horns, which help him to put aside the branches of the forest trees, and these horns grow like three tines, or points, and as the deer grows older he has more of them, until he has twelve. Then he is called a royal stag. He has a very strong sense of smell.

ART WORK. Show a picture of a deer, and have the children describe any they may have seen.

HAND WORK. The kindergarten children may have a number lesson with the cubes, counting to three or to twelve, according to age and ability; others may make a scroll, using an oblong of paper and two peas, sticks, and paste.

The **TRANSITION CLASS** may color the text, which is marked inside the scroll upon the lesson card.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER. Talk of the blessing of churchgoing and of church life. When Jesus was a little boy he went with his parents to the church, and he went there when he became a man. This is a good habit which will always be a help to good living and right doing. The good Froebel, who gave us the kindergarten, made pictures and songs about families and the church and the bell and the organ. When the baby, who may be too small to go to church, sits at the window with the mother and watches other people going there, the child's sympathy is irresistibly drawn toward a crowd and toward a church.

Whisper Songs for January.

FIRST LESSON.

Little children now may be
Filled with God's own love and light;
Little children now may be
Good and true in Jesus' sight.

SECOND LESSON.

May we always seek to be
Like the holy Saviour-child;
Wise, obedient, faithful, true,
Good and gentle, meek and mild.

THIRD LESSON.

Holy Spirit, come, we pray,
Drive away our every sin;
Let the gentle dove of peace
Live and reign our hearts within.

FOURTH LESSON.

Jesus speaks, he speaks to-day,
Words of tender grace and love;
If we listen and obey
We shall live with him above.

Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

First Quarter.

PRaise SERVICE.

Teacher. Praise ye the Lord.

Class. Praise the name of the Lord.

Teacher. Blessed be the name of the Lord,

Class. From this time forth and for evermore.

SING OF REPEAT:

"Praise him, praise him, all ye little people,
He is love, he is love.

Love him, love him, all ye little people,
He is love, he is love.

"Serve him, serve him, all ye little people,
He is love, he is love.

Crown him, crown him, all ye little people,
He is love, he is love."

PRAYER SERVICE.

Teacher. I cried unto the Lord with my voice,

Class. And he heard me out of his holy hill.

CONCERT PRAYER.

"Dear Jesus, I love thee, I want to be thine,
And live so that others may see my light shine;
I want to be honest and useful and true,
And do unto others as I'd have them do.
I need thee each moment, I need thee always,
O, come to me, Saviour, and in my heart stay."

PRAYER BY TEACHER, closing with the Lord's Prayer.

SINGING. A church hymn adapted to the lesson.

GIVING SERVICE.

Teacher. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Class.

"Give with a glad heart, loving and free,
Give as the Saviour hath given to thee;
Give him thy heart's love, tender and true,
Give him thyself, 'tis all thou canst do."

BIRTHDAY OFFERINGS, followed by singing.

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

REVIEW OF LAST LESSON.

MOTION SONG.

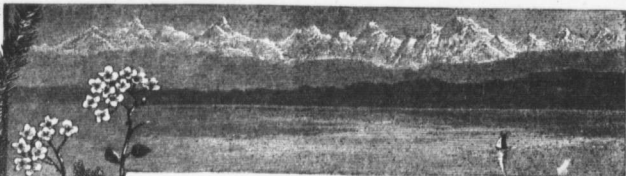
LESSON TEACHING, followed by ECHO PRAYER.

PARTING WORDS.

Teacher. The eternal God is thy refuge,

Class. And underneath are the everlasting arms.

Teacher. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:
the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.



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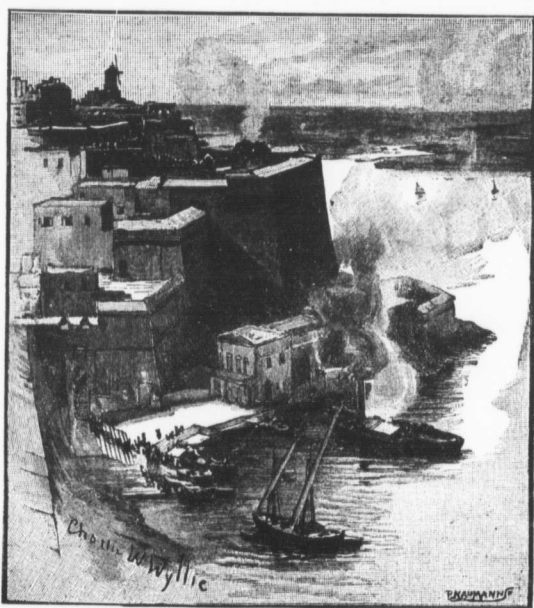
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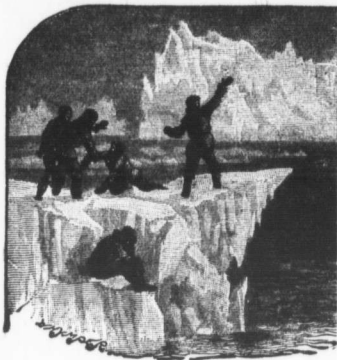
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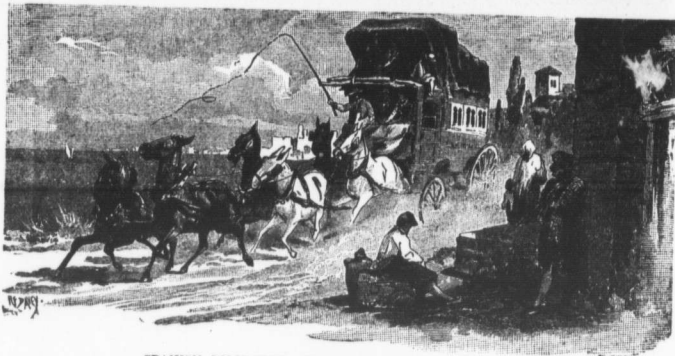
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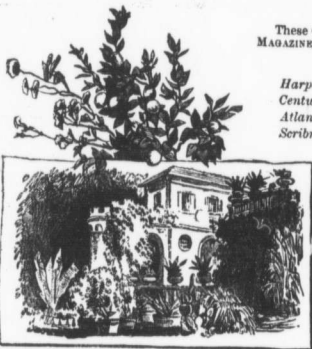


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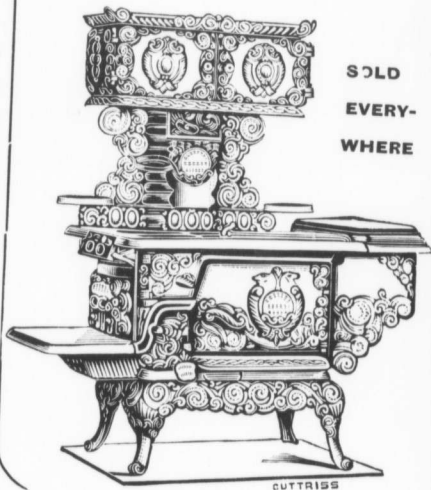
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