

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, December 29th, 1867.

Acts. xviii. 23-31: Paul preaches at Rome. Esther ix. 17-32 x. 1-3. x. The king's greatness. Luke ii. 1-10-14.

Sunday, January 5th, 1867.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

ACCORDING TO ROBINSON'S PARABOL OF THE GOSELS.

Part 1st. Events connected with the birth and childhood of our Lord.

LUKE I. 1-25. Preface to Luke's Gospel. An angel appears to Zachariah—Jerusalem. Basic—MAT. IV. 5 and 6.

In a village near Warsaw, in Poland, there lived a pious peasant of German parentage. Without any fault on his part he had come short in the payment of his rent, and the landlord had threatened to turn him out of house and home, even although it was in the middle of winter. The peasant went several times to the cruel-hearted landlord, to entreat him for forbearance, but in vain; on the next day he, with his wife and children, were to leave their home.

During the evening he was conducting family worship, and whilst reading a portion of Holy Scripture there was a knock at the window. It proceeded from an old friend, a raven, which Dorby's father had taken from the nest and trained. Dorby opened the window; the raven popped in, having in its beak a ring set with costly stones. At first Dorby thought of disposing of the ring, but on reflection he took it to the minister. The latter at once recognized the ring as one belonging to the King Stanislaus, to whom he went immediately and told the story.

The king sent for Dorby and rewarded him, so that at once he was relieved from rent, and the next year he made him a present of a new house and garden. Above the house door a tablet was erected, with the Bible text inscribed thereon: "Thou shalt not be troubled, and I delivered thee." Pa. 81: 7. and has diamonds worth ten thousand dollars.

The Raven and the King.

BY REV. F. C. LONG.

In a little Polish hamlet, Near Warsaw's steeples tall, In a cottage cosy built, But neat as it was small, Once there dwelt an honest peasant With wife and children five, Whom with daily toil and labor He scarce could keep alive.

'Twas the middle of the winter, His quarter's rent was due; And the landlord, he was pressing— What could poor Dorby do? What the summons all his courage, And with an honest face Right to the landlord went he And told him all his case.

'Little one I,' said the landlord, 'For creatures such as you, If you cannot pay my rent-bill The very day is due, Out from my house, you catiff, To-morrow you shall go.' Said Dorby, 'My wife and children Will perish in the snow.'

But the man so cruel-hearted Had from him turned away, Scorning both his humble tenant And what he had to say. Dorby, then, though stricken sorely And sad as sad could be, Said, 'May God to thee be kinder Than thou hast been to me.'

Round the poor man's simple table, That cold and cheerless night, Wife and children gathered sadly In the dim taper's light, While the father took the Bible Which he before him laid, Read the holy evening lesson, And then he knelt and prayed.

Oh, strong were the words of pleading He sent amid his tears, High up to the Throne of Mercy To greet the Father's ears. Rising from his lowly posture His faith was stronger grown, Said he, 'Mary, I am certain That God will hear his own.'

While they all sat musing deeply, And listening to the rain, Lo! a rapping and a tapping Were at the window pane. 'Dorby,' said the woman softly, 'Your faith is all in vain; Listen, listen! Don't you hear it? There's hail among the rain.'

Thinking, thinking of her children Out in the rain and hail, There sat the wretched mother With tearful face and pale; And deep in her heart she cursed him, The mean, unfeeling man— And a rapping and a tapping Were at the window pane.

'Philip, Philip,' said the father, 'Quick to the casement, go, And see what there is that's rapping There at the window so.' Philip did his father's bidding, And on the window sill Sat a friendly raven, tapping Alike with wing and bill.

'Come in,' said the laughing Philip, And o'p'd the casement wide, And the raven thus invited Did through the window glide. Right to Dorby went he boldy, And, perched upon his knee Looked around upon the children— A sly old bird was he!

And the children all were laughing— Their grief he had beguiled— But the raven, grimly sat he, Nor either winked or smiled, Dorby's sober eyes, too, twinkled To see the solemn thing; But the good wife murmured sadly, 'Some evil he doth bring.'

'Wife, there's nothing strange about it; His story soon is told; Seeks he here with us a shelter From the bitter night and cold. And I'm glad that we are able— This night to keep him warm, For we may not have to-morrow A shelter from the storm.'

Dorby's voice was rather husky As this he gently said, And the hand was quite unsteady That stroked the raven's head. Then, 'The Lord be praised,' said Dorby, 'See what the bird has brought!' From the raven's beak he'd taken A ring with diamonds wrought.

'Take it quickly,' said the woman, 'And sell it in the town; 'Twill pay the quarter's rent-bill, And—buy for me a gown!' Sternest words of condemnation Now from the peasant fell: 'Shame upon you, thoughtless woman! It is not mine to sell.'

Through the darkness and the sleeting New went the honest man; And down one street quick walked he, And down one street he ran, Till at last he reached the pastor's, And told him of the ring. 'Twas the King's most costly jewel, And Stanislaus was King.

Happy Dorby! happy Mary! And happy children five, Whom with daily toil and labor He scarce could keep alive! Now you have a little cottage As neat as it is small, With no pressing quarter's rent-bill— You pay no rent at all.

E'en the poor distrustful mother Now has a little faith, And right often for her children This little speech she saith: 'Children, always seek the owner Where'er you find a ring, For the Lord is up in heaven, And Stanislaus is King.'

Aunt Lina's Sunshine.

'And what is your name?' said I, as the child of the friend whom I had just come to visit passed before me. 'I see Aunt Lina's Sunshine, was the pleasant answer of Louisa.

'That is a queer name,' I said. 'Why do they call you so?' Shaking back her long ringlets, and looking up to me with her earnest, speaking eyes, she said: 'Aunt Lina's papa's sister; she is blind, and cannot see anything, nor the pretty flowers, nor the soft, white clouds, nor the little birds. She hears the birds sing, though, but she cannot see the pretty colors. She feels the warm sunshine, too, but she can't see how beautiful it makes the meadows look after the rain. But sometimes when she is sad and lonely she calls me to her, and I sit on my little stool by her and say the pretty verses to her that I learn in the Sabbath school; and I have learned some hymns, too, and I repeat those to her, and then she calls me her sunshine. Don't you think it's very nice to be Aunt Lina's Sunshine?'

'Yes, indeed I do. You are a real little missionary,' I said. 'No, I am not a missionary. I know who the missionaries are. They are people who go a great way off to the poor heathens that don't know anything about Jesus, and tell them about Him. What made you say that I was a missionary?'

'Because missionaries do good, and you do good to Aunt Lina, don't you?' 'I don't tell her about Jesus, because she knows all about Him, and tells me about Him; and the child stopped and thought a moment, and then looked up and added, 'No, I am not a missionary; I'm only Aunt Lina's Sunshine.'

I kissed her broad white brow, but said no more to her. But although I was silent, I didn't stop thinking; no, my thoughts were very busy with all the little girls and boys of my acquaintance. I wondered how many of them were 'Sunbeams' in their homes. How many made themselves the lights of sad hearts by their cheerful endeavors to make others happy. All have not an 'Aunt Lina,' blind to all beautiful things, and whose heart may be gladdened by the love of a little child, but many have a sick friend or acquaintance to whom kind attentions would come like sunlight, making an otherwise dreary home bright and cheerful; and all have friends who are sometimes 'sad and lonely,' to whom a word of love or sympathy would be more precious than the sunshine.—Band of Hope Review.

Sponsors; whence are they?

Sponsor comes from *spondeo*, I promise. A sponsor then is a promiser. In the baptismal service of the Church of England, the sponsor is the god-father or god-mother of the child. Among Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists, the parents themselves are the sponsors. They answer for the child, and promise for it what it can neither answer nor promise for itself. We hear a great deal of sponsor's duties and parental vows in connection with baptism; they are said to be very solemn and what no one ought to take on himself, without seriously weighing the engagements before he makes them.

Now it is surely a very natural question for us to ask, Were there any sponsors required in Apostolic baptism? Do we ever read of Baptismal vows laid on parents for their children in the New Testament? If they are so very solemn, what gives them this solemnity? If there is no allusion to any thing of this kind, then they must be of human invention. The fact is admitted by all, that there is not a single instance of infant baptism in the New Testament, neither is there the most distant allusion to parents being put under vows in connection with the baptism of their children. But not only is there no mention of sponsors in Apostolic baptism, there is no room for them. You cannot introduce any thing of this kind without making a rent in what Jesus has made whole. In Apostolic baptism the believer made his own request to be baptized, and no one was needed to answer for him—all the vows and engagements he took on himself; and just as we might expect, there is not even the allusion to any one else taking them.

Whence then did all this teaching come from? The answer is obvious. The New Testament knows nothing of infant baptism, and it knows nothing of its appendages—sponsors, parental vows, &c., but as soon as the former was made a church ordinance, the latter must follow. Baptism is connected with repentance, the child can't say it repents, what then shall be done? Let us get persons who will promise the repentance of the child. Thus came sponsors and parental vows at the baptism of the infant. They rose together and live together. They are both outside the sacred writings; neither is a Christian ordinance. You may tack them on to Apostolic Christianity, but you can't insert them, for there is no place for them. This administering an ordinance to unconscious subjects, and obedience by proxy, is as foreign to the teachings of the New Testament, as the Romish confession and the mass are. It is a branch of that system of Judaism against which Paul never ceased to fight. It mystifies the gospel, and teaches for doctrines the commandments of men. It leads to the most superstitious notions about the babe on which the minister has put water, being sater and holier than other children. It is tradition and not scripture. It is superstition, and not intelligent faith.—Canada Baptist.

Religion amongst the Africans.

The different manifestations of religious thought in the different races of mankind vary as much as their physical structure. It is strange that the same characteristics appear in Africans, whether they be in their own native country, or in a state of bondage or freedom amongst Caucasians. A love of extravagant language, and of highly wrought pictures of the imagination constitute a large part of their religious feelings. The colored race in this province are, in these respects, very similar to those in the Southern States. The following illustrations are from one of our exchanges:

Let me first give you a normal experience, and then, perhaps, a specimen or two of wild or ludicrous ones, and 'wind up' with some attempt at an explanation of the phenomena.

When I proposed giving a normal experience, I did not mean an ordinary one. This enthusiastic people are never converted after the humdrum style of average Caucasian mortality. The candidate for admission to the church is sitting before me in the front rank of a dense mass of ebon humanity, his hands crossed, his face fearfully solemn; or perhaps he is rolling his head from side to side, his eyes turned so ecstatically upward that only the whites are visible. The master's permission is handed me first of all. I read it—'The bearer of this, John, has leave to join your church if you, upon examination, think him fit.' I commence: 'Well, John, tell us why you wish to join the church; why you think yourself a Christian.'

'Yesr. Well, sir,' (slow and sepulchral), 'I hearn old Christians say as how I didn't git deligion I'd be sartin to sink down to the burnin' pit when I died; and when I got to thinking about the fire an' brimstone, I got mighty skeered, and thought I'd try and do better. So I sot out to prayin'. But the more I prayed the wuss I felt,' (the sepulchral tone passes into the holy sing-song) 'and the more I prayed the wuss I felt, and the more I prayed the wuss I felt. There was a great big load on me, a pressin' me into the ground, 'twas a long road I was a travellin', and the mud got deeper and deeper—ah, and I sunk further and further—ah. But just as I was nigh about to gin out and go under, I heard a voice sayin', (and here the singing tone culminates in a semi-aching song) 'Your sins are forgiven, and you are sot free.' Then the load rolled off—there was no more mud, I was standin' on a rock, a big light was shinin' all round me, and I heard the angels a callin' of my name.'

A strong tinge of the ludicrous was often given by the poor creatures insisting upon telling precisely what they were doing the mo-

ment they were converted. One was feeding the chickens, another 'diggin' 'aters.' A genuine instance occurs to my mind. 'I was a boy, and our pastor was examining a negro candidate for membership. He had gone through the preliminaries, which I forget, and had got to the happy point just where he felt relief. 'Yes, boss, I knowed I was converted, jess thar—I felt so good. I had jess cum to the bank of the Alabama river, sir, and oh, I was so happy, it seemed to me that every leaf that rattled on the trees was a pancake, and the whole river was flowin' with molasses an' I had nothin' to do but gether and sop.'

Sometimes the ludicrous was mingled with the weird and horrible. Take the following: 'I had cum home from the field, and a burden was on me, and the preacher's words rung in my ear; I couldn't be still, so I walked away off from the negro quarter, for I couldn't stand to hear people singin' and laughin'. All of a sudden it seemed to me I walked in a great dark valley, over dead men's bones, and a black hole opened for me at the end, and I went down, down, down, through the pitchy darkness, with miserable howlings coming up from beneath me; at last I passed through a great wide brass gate, and I knew I was in hell, for there was a little pond all bubbling and boiling with melted lead and brimstone, and all round it the ground was red-hot abet-iron. I had hardly time to see all this when the monstrous black devil jabbed his pitchfork into me, and with one toss sent me deep under the boiling and burning lake. As I rose to the top, a host of little devils punched at my eyes with red-hot forks till I dived under, but the scorching heat soon drove me up to meet my tormentors, and again to dive. After awhile the big devil came, and fishing me out with his fork, flung me on the red-hot iron to dance awhile. All this time I kept trying to pray, but couldn't think of anything to say. At last it come, 'Lord Jesus have mercy,' and right away I felt the cooling shadow of the angel's wings as he swept down to save me; and now here I am alive from the very pit.'

All the while such wondrous narratives as this are being related, the ebon auditors exhibit the intensest interest. The old brethren and sisters encourage the fabulist: 'Bless de Lord, 'Dat's glorious now, 'He'll come fire (through) yit.'

Now, whence this strange uniformity of enthusiastic or supernatural experience?

Scientific, &c.

The 'sugar wedding,' thirty days after marriage, is the latest fashion.

A Scotch doctor has published a tract announcing that he has discovered in sulphur a sovereign remedy for diphtheria and all diseases of minute fungus growth.

'Well, wife, I don't see how they can send a letter on them wires without tearing on 'em all to bits.' 'La, me, they don't send the paper, but they send the writing in a fluid state.'

'Tom Brown,' M. P., suggests that steamers crossing between Dover and Calais should carry a supply of balloons, and that people should make ascension in them, being held down by a rope, thus avoiding sea sickness.

METEORIC.—The great display of meteors predicted for the 13th of November, was invisible in England owing to the prevalence of foggy weather. In Paris, says *Galignani's Messenger*, the spectacle was witnessed to great advantage, and between one and three in the morning the number of aerolites was so great that they could not be counted.

A CHINESE ALMANAC is a most extraordinary publication. The days for ploughing, building, travelling, and marrying are laid down in it with the greatest minuteness. The whole period of four seasons is divided into twenty-four solar terms, each possessing some characteristic name, and corresponding to the day on which the sun enters the first or sixteenth degrees of one of the twelve signs of the zodiac.

ELECTRICITY.—A new mode of testing armour plates for ships has been introduced and tried in Chatham dockyard, England; in which the detection of interior and unseen flaws is made by means of a magnetic electric current. The results are described as satisfactory and conclusive, whether in plates or bars—the smallest defects even having been discovered.

CURE FOR COLD FEET.—We are assured by one who has given the experiment a fair trial, that cold feet, and especially those superlatively frigid feet that are kept chilled by perspiration, may be relieved by a simple expedient. This is to wear cotton socks next the skin, and woollen stockings outside of them. In the instance of our informant, the result was successful in keeping his feet warm and dry. The singular consequence also ensued, that at night he would find the cotton socks (next his skin) quite dry, while the outside stockings would be perfectly damp.

NITRO GLYCERINE consists of one part of glycerine which is the essential sweetness of oil, and three parts of nitric acid. It is thirteen times as explosive as gunpowder, bulk for bulk. When it explodes one volume of oil is converted into 1,298 volumes of gas. It is heavier than water, and is insoluble, hence it can be used under water. Flame will not explode it, but it burns by contact with an ignited body as long as the body touches it. A heavy blow with a hammer will explode it. It is evidently ought not to be handled by ignorant, stupid or drunken men.