

Youths' Department.

LESSONS FOR 1871.

This Department of the Messenger has occasioned us some concern. What we have had in it has been of much service in the families of many of our readers. We desire to make it more interesting and instructive. We have concluded to adopt a Course of Lessons on THE WORDS OF JESUS,

as prepared by Rev. G. A. Peltz for The Baptist Teacher. We shall occasionally make use of some of the notes as given in that useful paper and from other sources; so as to illustrate the Lessons and make them of great value to Parents and Teachers in the instruction of their youthful charge.

Sunday, January 1st, 1871.

Subject: The New Birth. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 164, 165.

Sunday, January 8th, 1871.

The way of Salvation. JOHN iii. 14-21. Recite.—S. C., 166, 167.

ANSWER TO BIBLE SCENES.

No. XI.

The scene of Grief and Gladness described on page 404 may be learned from Luke vii. 11-16.

SCRIPTURE TEXT ILLUSTRATED.

Find the name of the person described in each of the three; first stanzas and the Precept referred to in the last:

Who in the sultry mid-day hour, Sat resting in the shade; And seeing strangers standing near, To give them comfort prayed. To spread the best of all he had, With kind and zealous care; Nor knew, until his task was done, He served his Master there?

What prophet in a widow's house In time of want did stay, Supported by the meal and oil, Which did not waste away; And when her only son lay dead, And succour seemed in vain, Te the poor mother's breaking heart Restored her child again?

Who weary sat beside a well, And asked a woman's aid; And when 'twas won, with gentle hand Her life before her laid; And left the precious gift of faith To raise her sinful heart; So, to the village folk she went, Her tidings to impart?

Let these three stories all incline A precept to obey, That pours a cheerful blessing round Upon life's dusty way. In kindly doing who can tell, How rich may be the gain, What golden links of truth and love Are woven with the chain?

“ JUST AS I AM.”

A few weeks ago, a little boy came to one of our city missionaries, and holding out a dirty and well-worn bit of printed paper, said: "Please, sir, father sent me to get a clean paper like that."

Taking it from his hand, the missionary unfolded it, and found it was a page containing that beautiful hymn, of which the first stanza is as follows:

“Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come!”

The missionary looked down with interest into the face earnestly upturned to him, and asked the little boy where he got it, and why he wanted a clean one.

“We found it, sir,” said he, “in sister's pocket, after she died; and she used to sing it all the time when she was sick, and loved it so much that father wanted to get a clean one, and put it in a frame to hang it up. Won't you give us a clean one, sir?”

This little page, with a single hymn on it, had been cast upon the air, like a falling leaf, by Christian hands, humbly hoping to do some possible good. In some little mission Sunday-school, probably, this poor girl had thoughtlessly received it, afterward to find in it, we hope, the gospel of her salvation. Could she in any probability have gone down into death, sweetly singing that hymn of penitence and faith in Jesus, to her latest breath, with the saving knowledge of Him which the Holy Spirit alone imparts?

THE BIRTHDAY OF CHRIST—WHEN WAS IT?

BY THE REV. HOWARD CROSBY, D. D.

Both the year and the time of year of our Lord's birth are uncertain.

1. JUSTIN MARTYR says that CHRIST was born a hundred and fifty years before the time in which he was writing his second Apology. Now, if he wrote this Apology in A. D. 146 (which is very

doubtful), and if the round numbers are to be used with exactness, then the date of CHRIST'S birth by this authority would be B. C. 5.

2. IRENEUS (Haer. 3, 25) says: “Our Lord was born about the forty-first year of the reign of AUGUSTUS.” Now, the reign of AUGUSTUS may have been reckoned from the death of JULIUS CAESAR or from the triumvirate, a year later. So that, according to this authority (if, again, we disregard the important word “about”), our Lord's birth was in B. C. 4 or B. C. 3.

3. TERTULLIAN (Adv. Jud. 8) gives the reign of AUGUSTUS as 56 years, of which 41 were before and 15 after the Nativity. Beginning with the triumvirate, we complete 41 years in B. C. 2, and thus have 15 years left for the reign of AUGUSTUS, which satisfies the facts of history. So, according to this authority, our Lord was born in B. C. 2.

4. CLEMENT of Alexandria (Strom. 1) says that curious investigations (they had to be curious investigations even in A. D. 200) gave both year and day of CHRIST'S birth, to-wit, 25th Pachon of the 28th year of AUGUSTUS. Of course, here the reign of AUGUSTUS is dated from the battle of Actium, or the death of ANTONY, a few months later (B. C. 31 or B. C. 30). The Alexandrine epoch of AUGUSTUS, which CLEMENT would undoubtedly refer to, dates from 1st Thoth—that is, 29th August, B. C. 30. The 25th Pachon is 20th May. So, according to this “curious investigation,” CHRIST was born May 20th, B. C. 2.

5. The Paschal Cycle of HIPPOLYTUS PORTUENSIS and the Computus Paschalis of CYPRIAN give data which make the year of the Nativity B. C. 2.

6. SULPICIUS SEVERUS in his Historia Sacra, written about A. D. 400, says, “In the reign of HEROD, in the 33d year of his reign, CHRIST was born, when SABINUS and RUFUS were consuls, on the 8th day before the Calends of January.” This is the 25th Dec., B. C. 4, or (it by “Sabino et Ruffo Consulibus,” we take it as anticipation of the consular year of those two which began on the 1st January) 25th Dec., B. C. 5. We might multiply differing authorities, but this is enough to show that there is no certainty regarding the year. The years B. C. 5, 4, 3 and 2 are each claimed.

As to the time of year, we have SEVERUS' testimony above, given in the year 400, for Dec. 25th, and 30 years later, THEODOSIUS II. fixed Christmas at that date. But we look in vain for an earlier determination of the Christmas season of the year. The 6th January was the date used in the Eastern churches in the fourth century. EPIPHANIUS of Cyprus (A. D. 367) uses that date as an Eastern bishop (Panar., lib. 2). CANON BROWNE, in his Ordo Sacrorum, by a careful examination of the time of HEROD'S death and other connected events, conjectures Dec. 8th, as the true date. Other authorities, with equally careful examination, have fixed it on April 5th.

The truth is that the anniversary of our Saviour's birth was never celebrated till two centuries had passed away after the event. It was then too late to recover the date with precision. We see God's hand in this. The “Lord's Day,” or the “first day of the week,” was the day of convocation, the holy day of the primitive Church (Comp. Rev. i. 10; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; John xx. 1, 19, 26). Any addition of holy days would weaken this one. The appointment of Christmas was a departure from primitive simplicity, and was contemporaneous with sacerdotal assumptions, a sign of growing externalism, which culminated in the gorgeous hierarchical Church of the white-washed pagan, CONSTANTINE.

The season of the year in which our Lord was born was most probably the spring. The beautiful springtime of Palestine, we might suppose a priori, would be the time chosen for the appearance of the Hope of the World. When all nature was putting forth a new life, how fitting that the Life from Heaven should start in its earthly growth! Moreover, we have great doubts whether shepherds would “abide in the field by night” near Bethlehem about the 25th of December.

The nights in the hill-country of Palestine are very cold in the winter, and shepherds at that season seek shelter. But the scene in the gospel (Luke ii. 8-16) is evidently suggestive of mild skies and genial atmosphere. The use of December by the Churches doubtless originated in the desire to conform to the customs of heathenism as far as possible, and thus smooth the road for the heathen to Christianity. In the Roman world the Saturnalia, or festival of Saturn, was the most merry and therefore the most prized feast of the year. During its continuance no public business could be transacted, the law-courts were closed, the schools kept holiday, and everybody gave himself up to absolute relaxation and unrestrained merriment. Presents were given among friends and mockings were elected in private circles. These festivities continued for seven days. Such a yearly playtime would be hard for a pagan to surrender. Christianity may adopt it and change its name, the character of the festival remaining very much the same, there being more fun than religion in it the world over. The giving of presents and the Twelfth night King (in England) are clear marks of the old Saturnalia. All such holy days invented by man are apt to degenerate (even when rightly begun) into mere holidays, times of frolic and feasting, like the so-called “Fast-day” of New England, which at once suggest to the mind the two meanings of the word fast. Let us have fun and frolic to all innocent lengths; but pray, let us not call it worship or religion. The two things are in different planes. We may worship while we frolic, and we may worship while we labor, but to call either frolic or labor religion is to use the cant and slang of the skimmed-milk philosophy.

Why are types like animals? Because it is not proper to lock them up without taking proof.

Missionary Intelligence.

(From the Macedonian)

TELOOGOOS.

WHOLE VILLAGES TURNING TO JESUS.

Mr. Clough, of Ongole, under date of Aug. 6, gives the following cheering intelligence:—

Our work still moves on like a noble river. Every month I hear of whole villages that are casting away their idols and turning to Jesus for salvation; 183 have united with us since January 1st. The last company, fifteen in number, were baptized last Sabbath. Brethren Timpany and McLaurin were present, having come up to see the place, preachers, people, etc., etc., with us. Br. McLaurin was highly pleased with all he saw; we are glad, because he will have so much more courage to wade through the Telooogo roots and idioms.

THREE HUNDRED AWAITING BAPTISM.

A native preacher among the Telooogos, gives a thrilling notice of the numbers who are turning to the Lord among that people. Mr. Clough writes:—

Our native preacher, Kondiah, supported by the Sabbath-school in Burlington, Iowa, who labors north-west of Cumbum, and between that city and the Ghauts, stated that he thought that at least 300 on his field were ready for baptism. I am off for that locality within two or three days. The weather is very hot, but I believe I shall be taken care of, and have no fears.

CONTINUED BAPTISMS.

Mr. McLaurin, of the same mission, writes thus:—

God is dealing very graciously with the mission. Br. Clough baptized twelve last month, and expects to go to the water to-morrow. At Nellore there is unusual interest just now. O God, bring many souls out of it. Br. Timpany, in his last visit out, baptized thirty. To-morrow we expect quite a number in. They are coming as I write, salaming with gleaming faces. There is considerable light in their features, though there is considerable dark too.

RENOUNCING IDOLATRY.

The onward progress of the mission among the Telooogos is indicated by the growing willingness of the people to renounce their idol gods. Mr. McLaurin says, under date of June 6:—

Yesterday was a good day for the “Lone Star Mission.” I baptized eleven into the likeness of the Lord and Master. Many more would have been in, only that it is threshing time with them, and all cannot leave at the same time. Whole villages are believing. In quite a number they have torn down their gods and temples, and formally renounced idolatry.

DO THEY GIVE EVIDENCE?

On this point, Mr. McL., in the same communication, offers the following satisfactory testimony.

Some of those men, baptized yesterday, never saw a preacher, native or foreign, and never heard of Jesus until a few weeks ago. And yet it seemed as if there was no mistake about their conversion. One man said that he felt it in his soul, and we could not shake him. He knew it. Yesterday I was trying, through an interpreter, to give them a short account of the Bible story, from the Creation to the Ascension of Christ. O, it was painful to see the amazement depicted on their faces: they had never heard so much Bible before.

BURMAH.

HOW SHALL THE FUNDS BE FURNISHED?

Mrs. Van Meter, carrying forward in her widowed state the work of her late husband, makes the following representation in regard to the Normal School in Bassein. So useful and important a work ought not to languish for want of means.

This year, after all we could do to collect from the Karens, finding their contributions amounting to only Rs. 2000, with which to buy paddy and everything, I wrote to all the villages that we could not refuse one, two or three from each village, and wished in every case the young men and women would teach school the coming season, and that those who were expecting to enter the Theological school should come; but more than that we could not receive, and we ought to limit the number to less than twenty. But sending in their “only a very few,” we commenced with thirty-seven, all so earnest and promising, that we felt we could not turn them away. Several of our young men are from families who have but recently begun to worship.

A COUGH REMEDY NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL.—Three cents' worth of rock-candy; three cents' worth of liquorice; three cents' worth of gum-arabic. Put them in a quart of water; simmer them until thoroughly dissolved; then add three cents' worth of paregoric, and a like quantity of antimonial wine. Let it cool, and sip whenever the cough is troublesome. It is pleasant, infallible, cheap, and good.—Exchange.

If your horse is lame, sore or galled, you should use “Johnson's Anodyne Liniment.” Wash the part with castile soap and warm water, rub dry with a clean cloth, then apply the Liniment, rub in well with the hand.

Have the readers of the Christian Messenger ever used any of Parson's Purgative Pills? If not, why not?—they are the best family physic, besides being the greatest anti-bilious remedy there is in this Country.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A TOUR IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

Was the subject of a lecture delivered by the Rev. E.M. Saunders before the Acadia Athenaeum on Wednesday evening 14th inst. Notwithstanding the unfavorable state of the weather the audience was much larger than usual. The lecture which occupied an hour and forty minutes in delivery, received undivided and appreciative attention throughout. Those who had seen what has been written on the subject and especially the exhaustive letters of “Edward Manning,” might have been led to expect that it would necessarily lack freshness and interest, but they were agreeably disappointed. A mere sketch can do it little justice. Broad, clear outlines of the physical features of the mother country and the characteristics of its people, skilful sketches of local scenery, apt illustrations, incidents of travel and humorous anecdotes were happily blended and presented in a manner so instructive and familiar that the new and useful knowledge was vividly impressed.

A happy allusion to the egotism and egoism into which one giving the results of his own observation falls, and an apology that lack of time had kept him from well arranging his materials, introduced the lecturer. He at once bore his hearers to witness a sunrise at sea, one of the mitigations of the evils of a trans-Atlantic trip—the sun rising, not full orbed as on the land, but first throwing up tongues of flame, till a huge fire blazes far away on the bosom of the leaden sea and dyes the heavens with varied hues; then gradually assuming a balloon shape, and at last the full circular form. The Old Country reached, its appearance, as it first strikes the eye, was described. In the country all traces of the primeval are nearly obliterated, the indigenous trees are well nigh supplanted by the laurel, the classic arbutus and the sycamore, the whole face of the country is chastened and humanized and the primal robe of Nature changed for purple and fine linen. England is transformed into a great garden. Ireland and the North of Scotland are others, not so well kept. The South of Scotland is a wilderness of mountains, the home of deer and smaller game. The central counties of England seem like a plain reclaimed from some lake. At least one beneficial effect of the land-holding system may be noted—the uniform and systematic manner in which the agricultural operations are conducted.

The cities were next noted. Their buildings of brick or stone, their streets closely paved, the bridges of stone or iron, the tenaces of iron, the mammoth stone quays of Liverpool, the river Lee turned from its channel and taught to flow between walls of rock, strike the mind of the beholder as made to endure. Next came the appearance of the people. As a mass vigorous and rosy, bearing off the palm for flesh and freshness, causing one to say “these can never suffer from sickness.”

A view from the Round Tower of Windsor Castle was next given. The tourist and his conductor are three hundred feet above the surrounding country. The day is the 28th of Oct. Twelve counties are spread out before them.—The deciduous trees have not the gorgeous hues of our own Autumn forests, but are clothed in pale russet and dun but a richer green than that which greets our eyes covers the fields, for the deep beautiful tint of Summer has only been succeeded by the lighter and more lustrous one of Autumn ever changing with the fall of light and shadow. The Home Park, the garden of the Queen, 500 acres in extent beautifully adorned with pools, lakes and rivulets, stretches away to the North and East. Great Park, a like paradise of 1800 acres lies on the South. Red and fallow deer roam through it. Miniature vessels float on the surface of its lakes. Every beauty delects it.—The great avenue, a carriage way between two foot paths bordered by great elms, extends a distance of three miles in a line as straight as an arrow, to Snow hill, on whose summit stands a huge equestrian statue of George III, looming up against the background of sky, and seeming as if about to charge down into the plain. To the South East is Runnymede, the beautiful birthplace of English liberty. There, crowned with a thousand winters, still stands the yew tree under which the charter was signed, and the table on which it was laid is still shown. Yonder is the home of Fox. The tomb of Herschel and the last resting place of Burke are near. The spires of the churches in whose churchyards, Penn and Gray and their mothers sleep, are pointed out. Here is the scene of the