

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

FOURTH QUARTER REVIEW.

Theme.—Prominent points in Paul's Life and Labors.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."—Phil. iii. 18.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Phil. i. Tuesday, Phil. ii. Wednesday, Phil. iii. Thursday, Phil. iv. Friday, Titus i. Saturday, Titus ii. Sunday, Titus iii.

I. Paul's Conversion. (a.) History preceding his conversion. Acts vii. 58-60; Phil. iii. 5; Acts xxi. 39; xxii. 28; xxiii. 6; xviii. 3; xxvi. 9-11; 1 Tim. i. 13. (b.) Circumstances attending his conversion. Acts ix. 1-19; xxvi. 12-18. (c.) History immediately after his conversion. Gal. i. 15-24; Acts ix. 19-50.

II. Paul's Labors at Antioch. (a.) The gospel among the Gentiles first takes root here. Acts xi. 19-21. (b.) Barnabas sent to the church here. xi. 22-24. (c.) Paul brought here. xi. 25, 26. (d.) Errand to Jerusalem and return. xi. 27-29; xii. 24, 25.

III. The First Missionary Journey. (a.) To Cyprus. Acts xiii. 1-12. (b.) To Asia Minor. xiii. 13-52; xiv. 1-21. (c.) Return to Antioch. xiv. 21-28.

IV. Council at Jerusalem. (a.) Occasion of it. Acts xv. 1-5. (b.) Council in session. 6-18. (c.) Decision of council. 19-21. (d.) Brought to Antioch. 22-25.

V. The Second Missionary Journey. (a.) The gospel preached in Europe, at Philippi. Acts xvi. (b.) Thessalonica and Berea. xvii. 1-14. (c.) Athens. xvii. 15-34. (d.) Corinth. xviii. 1-17. (e.) Return to Antioch. xviii. 18-22.

VI. The Third Missionary Journey. (a.) Chiefly passed at Ephesus. Acts xix. (b.) To Europe, and back to Miletus. xx. 1-38. (c.) Onward journey to Jerusalem. xxi. 1-16.

VII. Fifth and Last Visit to Jerusalem. (a.) Conciliation of Jews attempted. xxi. 20-26. (b.) Paul seized by the populace. 27-30. (c.) Rescued by Claudius Lysias. 31-36.

VIII. Imprisoned at Caesarea. (a.) Paul before Felix. xxiv. 1-26. (b.) Paul before Festus. xxv. 37; xxv. 1-12. (c.) Paul before Agrippa. xxv. 13-27; xxvi.

IX. Voyage to Rome. (a.) Shipwreck at Melita. Acts xxvii. 1-44. (b.) Detention at Melita. xxviii. 1-10. (c.) Arrival at Rome. xxviii. 11-16. (d.) Labors in Rome. xxviii. 17-31.

X. Paul's Commission Fulfilled. (a.) To the Jews. Acts xiii. 14; xvii. 1; xviii. 4; xxviii. 17. (b.) And also to the Gentiles. xiii. 46, 47; xviii. 6; xxviii. 25-28.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1. Where was Paul's native place? What was his early trade? Was he educated wholly in Tarsus? Who was his teacher at Jerusalem?

2. Who carried the gospel first to Antioch? What layman went there to strengthen the church?

3. What city became the starting-point of Gentile Christianity in the East? Recall some of the places Paul visited on his first mission journey?

4. On returning to Antioch, what trouble occurred? How was the difficulty between the Jewish and Gentile Christians settled? Who gave the final decision?

5. In what city was the gospel first preached in Europe? What led Paul to this city? What afflictions did Paul suffer at Philippi? Why was Paul more successful in Corinth than in Athens?

6. Where did Paul spend the most of his time on his third missionary journey? Who was the divinity of the Ephesians?

7. How many times before had Paul visited Jerusalem since his conversion? By whom was he seized whilst there? Who rescued him? To whom did Lysias send him?

8. Why did Festus bring Paul before Agrippa? How did he treat Paul?

9. State the course of Paul on his voyage from Caesarea to Rome? Where was he wrecked? What was his course then on the way to Rome?

10. How was Paul true to the Jews? Why did he turn to the Gentiles?

EXPOSITION.—Paul's Apostolic Mission.—"He was specifically and officially separated from the twelve, and was entrusted with a mission to which no one of them was equally adequate, and for which his nativity, culture, and antecedent life had qualified him. In his mind, and under his administration, Christianity was first treated as an independent sovereign. For this work there was requisite a thorough knowledge of the Judaic religions and philosophies which were to vanish with the growth of Christianity, but each of which, by the germs of truth which it embodied, might offer special advantages to the spiritual husbandman, Paul

has had no superior—hardly an equal—among men, he was no more than level with his work. We cannot but regard him as the first man of his age; and we can name no man of any age who seems to us greater than he."

His Training for his Work.—"At the Christian era there was not a spot on earth so well fitted as Tarsus for his nurture. Its discipline of valley, mountain, river and sea, was well adapted to make the perceptive powers keen and vivid, to inspire gorgeous fancies, to stretch to their utmost capacity the extensor muscles of the inner man, to form habits of rapid thought and sight-like intuition. Tarsus also was the metropolis of Eastern travel and commerce. Nowhere else, except in Rome, was there so free a commingling of people from every quarter of the civilized world, or so favorable a position for acquiring an intimacy with a broad diversity of languages, habits, customs, and opinions. The chief element of the place consisted of wealthy and cultivated Greeks and the Roman officials. The original barbarian stock remained, and the enterprising Jews were largely represented. Here, too, was one of the most celebrated of all the seats of learning, of which Paul seems to have availed himself, if we may judge from his style and his classical allusions. On his Jewish side, also, his education at Jerusalem and under Gamaliel, was thorough and perfect. Gamaliel was the most learned Jew of his age, and was reckoned among the seven in the long series of Rabbis who were honored with the title of Rabban—equivalent to Most Excellent Master."

His Social Position.—"This was evidently above mediocrity. He inherited from his father the citizenship of Rome. A Jew, or a native of Tarsus, could have obtained this only by purchase, or in reward of distinguished services. His style of address before high official personages is free equally from servility and from rudeness, betraying alike the tact of a highly accomplished man, and the dignity of a Christian."

Paul as an Orator.—"He cites those who speak of his bodily presence as mean, and his voice as contemptible. We can conceive of Paul's person as paltry and unattractive, yet as vindicated in countenance, mien, and gesture—transfigured, glorified by the vividness of his conceptions, the intensity of his zeal, the ecstasy of his devotion. The prime element of an orator's efficiency is character; and Paul was the greatest and best man of his age."

Paul as a writer.—"There is a singular union of strong reasoning and vivid emotion. He is severely logical, and, at the same time, full of intense feeling. He has been charged with obscurity. This is largely due to the weight of meaning with which he loads his sentences. He condenses in a single period exceptions, qualifications, subsidiary thoughts, cognate ideas, which an ordinary writer would open out into a long paragraph. His rhetoric is as perfect as his logic."

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

Paul's Journeys.—From Jerusalem to Caesarea. Sent by Claudius Lysias by night to Felix, the Governor, to protect him from the plot made by forty Jews.

From Caesarea to Rome he visits. Sidon. Syracuse. Myra. changed ship. Rhegium. Fair Havens. Puteoli. Claudia, to prepare for Appii Forum. The Storm. Three Taverns. MALTA—Saved. ROME.

See 2 Corinthians xi. 23-33.

Spoke. Wrote letters. Paul's Work. Preached. Took care of the churches.

In prisons often, chains, stocks. Received thirty-nine stripes fine times. Beaten with rods three times. Stoned once. Shipwrecked three times. A day and a night in the deep. Weariness and painfulness. Watchings and fastings. Cold and nakedness. Waters. Heathen. Robbers. False brethren. Jews. In city and wilderness.

That may be right which is not pleasant, and that pleasant which is not right; but Christ's religion is both. There is not only peace in the end of religion, but peace in the way.—Matthew Henry.

Booths' Department.

The Latest Device of Santa Claus.

JULIA COLMAN.

It was the 18th of December, and some of us had our minds full of knotty Christmas problems; how to make a little go a good ways, how to make presents acceptable and yet have them cost little or nothing. It was hard work for us.

We sat down to breakfast, a little absent minded, I fear, but just as grace finished there came a long bright ray of sunshine streaming into the breakfast room, and right across the table, brightening up everything, so that we exchanged delighted glances, and Herman exclaimed, "That's a prophecy of light ahead!"

"Let us hope so," said his papa, "but what's this?" and we all looked. Right there under his plate, as he turned it over, was a huge red envelope almost big enough for a napkin. "Oh, oh, what is it?" echoed two or three little voices, while the other young people looked their questions.

"Past Thanksgiving and too soon for Christmas," continued papa, opening the envelope, "but we'll find out what's in it," and he glanced over the red sheet he took out, "Well it's not for me after all, only that I'm to read it to you I suppose. It purports to be a letter from Santa Claus, so listen," and he read as follows:

CHRISTMAS PALACE, Dec. 17th, 1877.

To all the good boys and girls in Squirrel Glen.

DEAR CHILDREN: I am not coming around to see you next Christmas, so you need not hang up your stockings. Like all the rest of you, I feel the hard times and so I propose to save traveling expenses and let the postman and the expressman do some of it for me. Yes, it does cost me something for traveling expenses, if I do keep my own team. The country is getting to be so large and there are so many good boys and girls to visit. But you'll not mind, so long as I send something to every one of you, and I think I can manage it, for I have a good many bright young folks to help me, and I'll send you all letters to tell you where you can find your gifts. If you all fall in with the notion you'll have the pleasantest Christmas you ever spent. So with merriest wishes, I am still your old friend.

SANTA CLAUS.

The boys and girls around the table looked at each other in half perplexed silence till little Sammie broke out joyously. "Oh dear! no old Santa Claus feels the hard times!"

Then we all burst out laughing and the talk went on. After some vague wondering whether the letters would come through the post office and the parcels be found at the expressman's, Lucy brought us all back to our senses by saying simply, "I do not see how we are all going to get on without the stockings."

"That's so," said Herman, who was thinking about some nuts he had stored up for Sammie. Sammie opened his mouth to speak and then closed it again in silence, fearing he should betray his long cherished secret.

"I imagine," said Aunt Rose, who had been watching all this with much amusement, "that Santa Claus is getting wise in his old age. Heretofore he has just stuffed your gifts into your stockings, as if you were all babies, and now it seems he is going to write you letters about them; nothing very elaborate, I presume, if he is going to have boys and girls to do it. Perhaps he wants some of you to help him; who knows?"

The hint was sufficient. In the days that followed there were a great many private consultations with Aunt Rose, and toward the last the young folks surprised each other peering about in out of the way places, and yet trying to look very innocent.

Early Christmas morning there was a bustling about and before mamma was up, she heard a little knock at her door, and Bertie, the pet of her household, begged permission to come in.

"The 'spress man has come for you, mamma, first thing, and here's the letter," and he felt around in the dark to put it into her hand. Of course he got a hug and a kiss and then he went to get a light so that his mamma could read the letter, though he took good care not to stay to see her read it, and it was not till some time after that he remembered that he had not wished her a "Merry Christmas."

precious pink note, and opening it she read thus:

DEAR MAMMA AND PAPA: There is for you a ship load of love coming in full sail over the water.

SANTA CLAUS.

"Over the water" she repeated, "Where's that?" She could not imagine, but when she arose and went to the wash stand she found it on the top of the pitcher (yes, "over the water," she laughed,) a pretty paper ship with sails spread, and in the little hull were two little slips of paper, curiously folded to fill it up. She opened them and found printed out in capitals in child's hand—

I LOVE YOU, MAMMA. I LOVE YOU, PAPA.

That was the load of love, a simple thing, but more precious to her than gold and jewelry. "Hard times can't take away love," she murmured, and the tears came to her eyes, but they were such tears as soon disappear and leave a happy face behind them.

You may well believe that was the busiest house in Squirrel Glen that morning, full of mystery, fun and frolic. If Santa Claus was not there, his spirit was, and it seemed to possess the very house. Notes of all shades and colors were put under breakfast plates, and pinned up on door posts, or stuck in the looking glass, some with envelopes and some without and some merely little slips of paper, evidently penned on the spur of the moment, as if Santa Claus had just thought of something else and scrawled it down at once.

There was a mystery in the different colors of the notes; and each one knew his own, but he did not know to whom the others belonged. Sister Mabel had managed that.

But the greatest fun was to see how each one after reading a note would go off peering into all sorts of odd places, and then look at his note again with a puzzled air, and sometimes there were whispered consultations, especially with mamma and Aunt Rose, and though the latter did not seem to help them in the least, but she enjoyed it ever so much.

At the breakfast table, each of the three boys had found a blue note under his plate. Bertie's told him that he could find \$10, if he would go out to walk.

Sammy learned from his that there was a piece of silver for him in the book case, and Herman was informed that by looking in high places he might secure ten cents. They all laid their thoughts about the matter and some of them were wakened out and some were not. Herman thought it strange that anybody should make presents of money in that way, unless to very poor people, and then it was so queerly distributed. Little Bertie, only five years old, to get \$10 and himself, almost sixteen, to get only ten cents.

Sammy found his first, though he looked into all the drawers and took down all the books and put them back again before he noticed that there was a pretty new book among them called "A Piece of Silver," and that his own name was in it. When he found that it was a temperance book, he was sure that it came from Aunt Rose, for she was one of the Christian Temperance women and had a good deal to do with books.

Immediately the other two boys supposed that theirs were books also, and Herman went around looking on high shelves and on the tops of closets, though he was careful not to disturb things that belonged to others, because of course they would not expect him to do so. Then it occurred to him that he ought to search his own room first, but on his way thither in the upper hall, on the top of the step ladder leading up to the roof, he saw a package directed to him—well it was in a "high place," the highest in the house. How easy all these problems worked when solved. He opened a handsome temperance book by Miss Chellis, called "Ten Cents."

He had read some of her books before, so he expected a treat. And now for Bertie's \$10. If that were a book out of doors in the snow, it might get wet, so they all proposed to go and look for it together. And when they took down their caps, out fell from Bertie's gaily printed envelope containing \$10, in "toy money," cut out of stiff paper, with which Bertie could "play store." Herman concluded he preferred his "Ten Cents."

After enjoying the sport for a while, Aunt Rose went to her room and on the door was a note, in white, which read thus:—

"If Aunt Rose will watch particularly when she goes to her room she may hear the tapping of a little slipper, beating time to the music of a happy heart."

SANTA CLAUS.

When in her room she listened but heard nothing, she queried the note again. "That's my niece Mabel's hand writing, and though it's in white, which means to tell no tales, yet it's like her dainty self and the happy heart may be either mine or hers. People can be very happy, even though poor, if only the heart is right. We have lost money but we have not lost our happy hearts," and her thoughts ran off in a glad reverie. At last she started up thinking, "I cannot spend all the morning thus; what time is it?" Oh! there it was! her faithful time-piece hung in a dainty slipper of a watch case—"of course," she said, "watch and slipper were catch words enough, if I had not been stupid."

I haven't room to tell you half the doings of that pleasant day, nor of half the presents made almost without money—of the sled and the bat and the ball and the mufflers and the mittens which the boys and girls had made for some boys and girls poorer than themselves and the pleasant walk they had before dinner to bestow them, nor of the "squirrel's nest in the wood house" turning out to be a bag of nuts which Santa Claus bade him that found

"Not in selfishness to eat, But give them all to crown the feast."

This meant that they were to save them for the dessert at dinner, according to a good old rule in the family, that all dainties were to be kept until meal time and shared with the rest of the family, thus doing away both with greediness and with eating between meals. Oh, yes, and there was papa's pad of beautiful paper, which he never found until he went to bed, although he was bid "to make a pillow of it to keep his thoughts in, so that they need not keep him awake." And Sammie, who wrote it, had supposed he would go direct to his pillow and look. In the afternoon the DOWELLS all went to the Sunday school Christmas celebration, outwardly to thank God for his great Christmas gift to us all, even his dear Son, through whom alone all real happiness is possible.

In the evening, at the Christmas games in the own parlour, each one won a paper prize in their "notes" of the "stuffed" he or she had used for "notes" of the day, and all could tell where their gifts had come. But no one wore a "piece of silver" or a "piece of ten cents" or a "piece of ten cents." Mabel replied, "What's the matter?" Mabel replied, "What's the matter?"

At the last they voted a hearty approval of this latest device of Santa Claus and hoped he would be both as wise and as witty next year.

—Monthly Reader.

The Horse that could Pump.

I have told you of a cat that could lift the latch of a door; but I have not yet told you of a horse that could pump.

What I tell you now is true. A friend of mine had a horse, who, when the trough was not full, would take hold of the handle of the pump with his teeth, and move it up and down until there was as much water as he would like to drink.

Once, on a hot day in June, when he had had his drink, the cows came up, and cried, "Moo," "Moo," which meant, "Oh! we wish we had some water!"

Then the good horse went to work, and pumped for them up and down, up and down; and they all had a good drink, and were glad.

I was so pleased to see the horse so kind, that I ran into the house and got a lump of sugar for him; for he is very fond of sugar. How glad he was to get it! He made a noise which seemed to say, "How nice!"—Monthly Reader.

Better to hope, though clouds hang low; And to keep the eyes still lifted; For the deep blue sky will soon peep through.

When the ominous clouds are lifted, There never was a night without a day, Nor an evening without a morning; And the darkest hour, the proverb goes, Is the hour before the dawning.

We ought to think much more of walking in the right path, than of reaching our end. We should desire virtue more than success.—Canning.