

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1878.

SUNDAY, July 14th, 1878.—The Childhood of Jesus.—Luke ii. 40-52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY.—Verses 46-49.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."—Luke ii. 52.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke ii. 21-52. Tuesday, Isaiah xi. Wednesday, vs. 41; Exodus xxiii. 14-19. Thursday, 1 Samuel ii. 1-19. Friday, John i. 1-14. Saturday, Matthew xiii. 53-58. Sunday, 1 Cor. i. 18-31.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The growth of Jesus. Vs. 40. II. Taken to Jerusalem. Vs. 41, 42. III. Lost. Vs. 43-45. IV. Found. Vs. 46-50. V. Subject to his parents. Vs. 51. VI. Increased in wisdom and stature. Vs. 52.

QUESTIONS.—To what does Nazareth owe its celebrity? Where is Nazareth?

I. The growth of Jesus.—Vs. 40.—What is meant by "the child grew"? What by "filled with wisdom"?

II. Taken to Jerusalem.—Vs. 41, 42.—What was the Passover? Ex. xiii. 3-7. Was Mary obliged to go to it. Ex. xxiv. 23. Why did Jesus go up to the feast?

III. Lost.—Vs. 43-45.—When did Mary and Joseph discover Jesus' absence? Where did they search for him?

IV. Found.—Vs. 46-50.—Where was Jesus found? Was he at all forward or disrespectful there? What made the Rabbis astonished at his words? Who does Jesus mean by my Father? John x. 29, 30, 36. What by my "Father's business"? John xvii. 4; x. 11.

V. Subjection to his Parents.—Vs. 51.—How was Jesus subject to his parents? What was his probable employment in his youth and opening manhood? Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

Summing-up Questions.—Why was Jesus brought up in Nazareth, and not in Jerusalem? 1 Cor. i. 27. Why are we told nothing about the eighteen years of Jesus' life between this lesson and his baptism? Can this silence be explained on the theory that his mission was merely an exemplary and moral one? What, then, was the great mission of the Saviour? John iii. 14; Acts xvii. 3.

NAZARETH is not mentioned in the Old Testament nor in Josephus, and derives its celebrity from its connection with the history of our Saviour. It is about sixty-five miles north of Jerusalem, in the hills of Southern Galilee, and is reached from the plain of Esdraelon by very rocky and precipitous paths. The valley in which it is situated runs northeast and southwest, and is about a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad. On the western side of this valley lies the quiet village in which the Saviour of men spent more than three-fourths of his years. From a hill back of the town, rising to 400 or 500 feet, he could see on the north the ridge of Lebanon and the white top of Hermon; on the west, Carmel and a glimpse of the Mediterranean; on the east and southeast, Gilead, Tabor, and Gilboa; and on the south, the plain of Esdraelon and the mountains of Samaria, with their interspersed villages, Cana, Nain, and Jezreel—"one of the most beautiful and sublime spectacles which earth has to show." The town itself was small, and held in little repute. For passages referring to Nazareth see Luke i. 26-28; ii. 39; Matt. ii. 23; Luke iv. 16; Matt. xiii. 54; John xix. 19; Acts xxii. 8.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 40.—This verse refers to the whole period between the return to Nazareth (vs. 39) and the visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve (vs. 41). Previously to the final return to Nazareth occurred the events recorded in vs. 21-28, and in Matt. ii. 1-22. The child grew. In size or stature. Waxing strong in spirit. The better authorities omit as spurious the words "in spirit," and suppose that the manuscripts in which they occur had by mistake taken them from i. 80. This is growth in natural power, doubtless including mental power, culture, and knowledge. Filled with wisdom. Wisdom is a moral term, and implies a character formed upon right principles which reveal themselves in right action. The grace of God. Loving-kindness, manifested favor.

Verse 41.—To Jerusalem.—Because there was the temple and there, therefore, the law required the public feast to be observed. For the origin, nature and law of the Passover, see Ex. xi-xiv; xxiii. 14-17; Lev. xxiii. 4-8. It occurred near the 1st of April. Parents. Plural, showing that it was the habit of both to go, though by the Hebrew law women were not required to attend. Ex. xxiii. 17.

Verse 42.—Twelve years old.—Apparently this was the child's first attendance. Went up. Jerusalem was "up," both as being the capital, that is the head city, of the nation, and as being situated on high ground.

Verse 43.—Fulfilled the days.—Of the festival, which lasted eight days. The child Jesus tarried behind. Apparently by design on his part, though not in order to make his parents trouble, but in obedience to his heavenly Father's will. Joseph and his mother [or, as another reading has it, "his parents"] knew not of it. The kindred and acquaintance kept and travelled together, and a lad that age might naturally be trusted to keep with his company. Vs. 44.

Verse 44.—A day's journey.—This is understood to be the distance usual for the day, or afternoon, as starting homeward from a feast, namely, some ten miles. Sought him. They had camped, and were preparing to retire. Then the child would be expected to be with the parents.

Verse 45.—Turned back.—Probably on the next morning—perhaps that very night. At first with sharp anxiety, no doubt, which, however, gradually became "sorrow." Vs. 48.

Verse 46.—Three days.—This, in Jewish mode of speech, would mean the day or evening when the loss was discovered, the next whole day when probably the parents returned, and the day or part of day on which he was found. In the temple. The word used in the Greek shows that this was not the temple proper, but the sacred enclosure in which were many halls or rooms. The doctors. Teachers of the Jewish law or Scriptures; learned scribes. The position of Jesus, "in the midst of the teachers," was not that of a mere pupil "at their feet," but of one who had awakened a very special interest, and been received to free intercourse. Both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Verse 47.—All that heard him, etc. Not less the teachers than the others. The Divine wisdom of his Divine nature shone out. His answers. Showing that he was as ready to answer their questions, as to ask them questions.

Verse 48.—They [the parents] were amazed.—That he was among such dignitaries, and in such honor with them. Perhaps they had underestimated his knowledge of divine things, and overestimated that of the doctors. Son, why hast thou? etc. Very likely not spoken till Jesus had withdrawn from the company, and was alone with his parents. This is the language of surprise, and implied rebuke.

Verse 49.—About my Father's business.—God, not Joseph, was his true Father. The original might also carry the meaning, in my Father's house. The Temple was the house of God, and its associations filled his mind and heart with God, and a sense of Divine things.

Verse 50.—Did not understand.—Not fully, its higher meaning.

Verse 51.—Was subject.—Living as a son in the relation, and with the obedience of a son. In her heart. See vs. 19.

Verse 52.—Essentially the same statement as that in vs. 40, but referring to the period of his life from 12 years old and upwards, and indicating more of position and recognition among men.

COURSE OF THOUGHT.—I. Jesus in Childhood.—Verses 40, 41.—(1.) Of Jesus. He was both like and unlike other children. (a) Like, as being truly a human child, with a child's nature, wants, etc. (b) Unlike, as having a sinless nature, a personal union of the Divine and human natures, and a consequent fulness of Divine wisdom according to the stage of his progress and the capability of that stage.

II. Taken to Jerusalem.—Verse 42.—(1.) With his parents. The family ought always to be kept in unity, one whole, together, especially in worship. (2.) Of his own choice. His age was such that he could act for himself. A lesson to children of like age. (3.) To the Passover. He was himself the true Paschal Lamb of which the offering at the Passover was the type.

III. Lost.—Verses 43-45.—(1.) Parents and child separated, each drawn toward his own home. Jesus is missed when lost. He escapes amid the bustle of business and worldly care, but in the hour of silence we find and feel the loss. There is a void in the home and the hear, if Jesus is gone. Sometimes we too suppose our Lord to be with or near us till we halt for a night and look around. (4.) The sorrowful search.—Steps retraced, time lost, anxious, painful sorrow.

IV. Found.—Verses 46-50.—(1.) Three days of separation.—Perhaps symbolic. (2.) Found in the temple. The constraint of love, not of authority, held him there. (3.) Human wisdom, even the wisest of it, stands amazed before the wisdom of God. (4.) Even to the most intimate friends of Jesus he sometimes reveals himself in such a way as to amaze and confound. He is ever beyond our comprehension, and demanding faith where sight fails. (5.) We may feel like making complaint, and even speaking rebuke, where better knowledge would either seal our lips, or move them in grateful and adoring praise.

V. Afterward.—Verses 51, 52.—(1.) God will not displace the earthly by the heavenly, but glorify the earthly into the heavenly. (2.) A revelation of God is food for thought. (3.) From germ to maturity by growth, in the person of Jesus, in his works, in his church, in his discipline.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, July 21st, 1878.—Ministry of John the Baptist.—Luke iii. 15-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." Luke i. 15.

The Story of the Bible Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

Lesson II. July 14.

When the baby was eight days old, his name was given him—Jesus, which means Saviour. We do not hear any more of the boy Jesus till he was twelve years old, when he came in the spring-time, with his parents, from Nazareth, where they lived, to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of the Passover. After a week they started to return home; it was a journey of about eighty miles, and all the people from one place traveled together. The child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, and it was not till they stopped for the night that Joseph and Mary looked for him. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem. After looking for three days they went to a room in the Temple, and there they found him. He was listening to the teachers, and both asking and answering questions, surprising those learned men by his wise sayings. His mother said, "Son, why have you done this? It has made us so sorry." He said, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" But they did not understand him, though his mother remembered what he said always. But he went home to Nazareth with them, and obeyed them. As Jesus grew in size, he grew in wisdom and in favor with God and man.

and I would give her a penny: I am sure I never expected she would come back. She did, however, with the change. "Now," said I: "you are an honest girl, and I shall give you two cents for yourself and one penny for the little girl that first came with you, if you know where she lives." She said she did, and would give it to her, and so went away. It was nearly a fortnight when she came back, and I was busy writing at my desk. She came in, and coming up to me, said, "The little girl has moved away from next door, and I can't find her, sir, and I've brought the penny back, and," reaching her hand out to me, "here it is, sir." "Give it to me," said I. She did and turned to go away. I'm an old fool; I nearly cried; I'm a close-fisted rascal; I kept the penny, had a hole bored through it, and it is fastened to my gold watch chain; I am an old fool, and what I do know I don't know certain, but I think I value that nickel penny with a hole in it almost as much as I do my gold watch chain. The chain is a small and plain one, and only cost fifteen dollars at the South, where gold always was (and certainly is now) much more valuable than it is in this northern land of plenty. God bless thee, poor and honest Anne. Erin was once thy home, but there is room enough under the folds of the stars and stripes for as many honest hearts like thine as may ever seek their shelter.

Liberal gentlemen, as you cross from Beaver to Delmonico's, to get your nice lunch (it is good), remember Anne; she sweeps the crossing in bad weather. If any look-after-the-penny-man had been present, who knew my circumstances, when I settled up with Anne that day, I'm afraid he would have called me an extravagant rascal.

ANOTHER FACT.

'Twas a very rainy and dark day. I went to the post-office to buy some stamps (in Sept., 1862). A great crowd—in taking out my money dropped a dime which rolled under a bench; looked for it—couldn't find it. A common-looking little boy says, "What are you looking for, sir?" "I've dropped a dime, and if you'll find it you shall have half." He searches—pushed by the crowd, while I was putting a stamp on my letter. "I've found it, sir," and hands it to me. "Now," says I, "go and change it, and you shall have half." Off he goes, lost in the crowd; didn't expect to see him again. By and by, along he elbows his way, with the change in pennies. "Brave boy," I say, "you shall take six cents for your share, as you have had so much trouble." "No, I won't, sir; half is fair, and that is all I'll take!" Couldn't force any more upon him; said he was apprentice to a sail-maker; gave him my card, and told him to come whenever he wanted anything; have never seen him since.

TRUE POLITENESS.

In the Wall Street stage for Forty-second Street. It was some years ago, when change was very scarce; as I got in there were two very pretty young ladies, I'm sure. I handed a one dollar bill up to the driver; he couldn't change it. I put my hand in my pocket and found that I had only a three-cent piece—bawled that up—driver grumbled about people getting a ride for nothing, noways. I thrust up the dollar, and said, "Take that, and keep it; I don't want to ride for nothing, and I must ride for time is precious." The youngest lady looks at her sister (I suppose, for there was a resemblance), opens her purse, and hands me a three-cent piece, and says, "Please to give him this, sir?" The action was so gracious, so truly polite, so very womanlike (I can't use any more expressive term), that I murmured such thanks as I could think of, took the money, paid the driver, redeemed my one dollar bill, and am under everlasting obligation to all pretty and polite young ladies. If I had been a handsome young man, there might be a misconception of motives—but the white beard was the test.—Watchman.

PROVIDENCE MADE PLAIN.

There is an old Jewish tradition concerning Moses, which, though only a tradition, throws a clear and beautiful light on the mysteries of God's providence in its dealings with mankind on earth. That great prophet, says one of the Rabbis, was called by God to the top of

a high mountain, and there was permitted to ask of the Most High; any questions he pleased, concerning the government of the universe. In the midst of one of his inquiries as to the mysteries of Providence, he was commanded to look down on the plain below, where there was a spring of clear, cool water. At this spring a soldier, full-armed, had alighted from his horse to drink. Having quenched his thirst, he had no sooner gone than a little boy came to the same place, and finding a purse the soldier had dropped, picked it up and went his way. Soon after there came an infirm old man, with hoary hairs, and weary with age and traveling, who having quenched his thirst, sat down by the spring to rest. The soldier by this time had missed his purse, and coming back demanded it of the old man, who affirms that he has not seen it, appealing to heaven to attest his innocence and the truth of his declarations. The soldier not believing him, in anger kills him on the spot! Moses falls on his face in horror and amazement that such an event should be permitted by a just and holy God, when the divine voice thus prevents his expostulation: "Be not surprised, Moses, that the Judge of all the earth should have suffered this to come to pass. To you there seems no reason why that child should be the occasion of the old man's blood being spilt. But know that that same old man, years ago, was the murderer of that child's father!"

So in every event of Providence there is doubtless some connection with what has gone before it; in every one there is some wise design; in every one the Judge of all the earth will do right.

The Psalms in Scotch.

A correspondent of the Christian Register having received a copy of "The Psalms frae Hebrew intil Scottis, by P. Hatley Waddell, LL.D., minister," copies a portion for that paper. The translator says: "The bulk of the language, both in terms and phraseology, is such as was in daily use by all well-educated peasants and country gentlemen of the last generation, as such as they had received by tradition from their own forefathers, from the days of the Reformation and the Covenant." Here is a specimen:

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"Oh, no," said she, with a child's simplicity, "that could not be, for he never said one word about Jesus Christ." Her words came to the pastor's ears, and sank deeply into his heart, influencing all his after life.

That great prophet, says one of the Rabbis, was called by God to the top of

a high mountain, and there was permitted to ask of the Most High; any questions he pleased, concerning the government of the universe. In the midst of one of his inquiries as to the mysteries of Providence, he was commanded to look down on the plain below, where there was a spring of clear, cool water. At this spring a soldier, full-armed, had alighted from his horse to drink. Having quenched his thirst, he had no sooner gone than a little boy came to the same place, and finding a purse the soldier had dropped, picked it up and went his way. Soon after there came an infirm old man, with hoary hairs, and weary with age and traveling, who having quenched his thirst, sat down by the spring to rest. The soldier by this time had missed his purse, and coming back demanded it of the old man, who affirms that he has not seen it, appealing to heaven to attest his innocence and the truth of his declarations. The soldier not believing him, in anger kills him on the spot! Moses falls on his face in horror and amazement that such an event should be permitted by a just and holy God, when the divine voice thus prevents his expostulation: "Be not surprised, Moses, that the Judge of all the earth should have suffered this to come to pass. To you there seems no reason why that child should be the occasion of the old man's blood being spilt. But know that that same old man, years ago, was the murderer of that child's father!"

So in every event of Providence there is doubtless some connection with what has gone before it; in every one there is some wise design; in every one the Judge of all the earth will