

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson II.—JANUARY 11.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Matt. ii. 13-23.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 16-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word."—Matt. ii. 13.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Flight into Egypt, Matt. ii. 13-23.
T. Childhood of Jesus, Luke ii. 40-52.
W. Early associations of Jesus, Matt. xiii. 53-58.
T. Refusing to be Comforted, Gen. xxxvii. 23-35.
F. How God Instructs, Job xxxiii. 14-30.
S. A Father's Obedience, Gen. xxii. 1-14.
S. Working together for Good, Rom. viii. 28-39.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 13: Matt. i. 20; Acts v. 19; Acts xii. 11; Matt. x. 23; Exodus i. 22; Job xxxiii. 15.
With vs. 15: Ex. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1.
With vs. 18: Jer. xxxi. 15.
With vs. 21: Gen. vi. 22; Heb. xi. 8.
With vs. 22: Psalm xlvi. 14; Psalm lxxiii. 24; Isa. xxx. 21.
With vs. 23: Luke ii. 39; John vii. 41; John xviii. 5, 7; Isa. liii. 2; Jer. xxiii. 5.

THE INFANT KING PRESERVED.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Perils, Vss. 13, 16-18, 22. II. Warnings, Vss. 13, 19, 20, 22. III. Preservation, Vss. 14, 15, 21, 23.

QUESTIONS.—Who was the Joseph named in this lesson? Who was the Herod?

I. Vss. 13, 16-18, 22.—What peril to the infant Jesus was made known by the angel? What cruelty of Herod's showed this to be true? How many children probably were slain at this time? What prophecy was then fulfilled? What new peril arose when Herod died? What did Jesus bid his disciples to remember? (John xv. 20.)

II. Vss. 13, 19, 20, 22.—How many warnings were sent to Joseph? How many to the wise men? (Vs. 12.) From whom did these come? By what means? For what purpose? What several directions were given in these warnings? Are such warnings ever given in our days? What are God's chief methods of warning men? (Psalm xix. 11; Col. i. 28.)

III. Vss. 14, 15, 21, 23.—How did the wise men treat the warning they received? (Vs. 12.) How did Joseph treat his warnings? From what several perils was Jesus thus preserved? What lessons may parents learn from Joseph? What may all learn from the course of the wise men? (Acts iv. 19; v. 29.) What prophecies were fulfilled because of Joseph's obedience? What may be expected from obedience in us?

TOPICS.—The journeys of Joseph, with outline-map and estimate of distances travelled; the condition of Egypt in the days of Jesus; the character of Herod and of Archelaus; the slaughter of the innocents—its extensiveness, etc.; angels; dreams as a means of religious instruction; the prophecies fulfilled in the events of this lesson.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 13.—In a dream. This expression occurs four times within the brief space of eleven verses in the present chapter. Twice it is said that an angel appeared; twice it is said that God made a communication, the manner of the communication not being stated. The communication was conveyed in a dream, and certified to the subject as from God. Of course this was miraculous. It is vain to seek a merely natural non-miraculous explanation. Note, it was, in both cases of angelic visitation to Joseph, an angel of the Lord (not the angel, as the common version has it)—that is, a being not otherwise distinguished than as an individual member of the innumerable host of angels attendant on God and ministrant to his will.

Verses 14, 15.—It was, of course, a very serious matter in those times to make such a journey as that enjoined upon Joseph. It would occupy, at the shortest, several anxious and laborious days. Joseph's undertaking showed a spirit of trust and obedience on his part, that must have been inspired by unmistakable evidence of divine command. By night. In the East, night journey-

ing is preferred on account of the greater coolness. Not unlikely, Joseph was asleep at night when the message came. It would then appear that he roused himself and made his start forthwith, that very night. The word Flee imported the need of haste. Until the death of Herod. The interval was not long. Herod probably died the very year of Christ's nativity. That it might be fulfilled. This formula is frequent in Matthew. The question has been much discussed whether the language of the original imports actual design (that is, on God's part) or other coincidence. The sojourn of ancient Israel—in Egypt, and the subsequent deliverance, had a prefiguration in them of this incident in the infant life of Jesus. See Hosea xi. 1. We are accordingly to recognize not simply result, but purposed result, when this formula is employed.

Verse 16.—It accorded with Herod's unscrupulous disposition that, in rage at being disobeyed by the wise men, he should at the same time seek to secure his object, and vent his passion, by the wholesale slaughter here related. We may easily, however, be led to over-estimate the number of children involved. Bethlehem, with all its environs, might contain a score or so (ten or twelve is the estimate of Smith's Dict. Bib.) of children of the age to be destroyed under Herod's order. This is shown by the Greek words used. History, outside of the Bible, tells worse things of this wicked ruler. He shed the blood of various members of his own family, among them Antipater, his eldest son. Josephus gives an account of Herod's ordering that the nobles summoned to his death-bed should be executed immediately on his decease, for the purpose of thus, at least, having that event attended with general mourning. These were but incidents of a reign signalized by acts of sanguinary vengeance. From two years old. Herod would make sure of covering time enough to include all children born about the date which he had learned from the wise men.

Verses 17, 18.—Then was fulfilled.—Old Testament sayings fulfilled. Matthew seems to have prepared his gospel with special reference to Jewish Christians. The words of Jeremiah might fitly be used to describe the sequel of Herod's butchery. (Jer. xxxi. 16): "They shall come again from the land of the enemy." Rachel (Rahel) is Jacob's wife buried near Bethlehem. She is represented by Jeremiah in this place as weeping over her lost children (descendants), led away into captivity on the road past her tomb. The original passage is beautiful, and Matthew's application is natural and striking. Ramah here is a locality not certainly identified.

Verses 19, 20, 21.—Joseph is once more, in a dream, visited by an angel of the Lord, the same or another, with this message: "Take the child and his mother [now, as before, the child has precedence in mention over the mother] and go back to Palestine, for they [perhaps Herod and Herod's agents, though Herod alone may be meant under the indefinite plural] are dead who sought to slay the child." Welcome orders to Joseph and Mary.

Verse 22.—Archelaus seems to have inherited the bloody disposition of his father, and no wonder Joseph was afraid of him. Josephus relates that soon after his accession, Archelaus slew 3,000 Jews in the temple. Of this massacre, perhaps, Joseph heard on his return journey and paused in doubt and fear. Once more God reveals himself to Joseph in a dream, and Joseph turns aside to Galilee. Archelaus had not succeeded to the entire kingdom of Herod his father. Antipas, a milder man, brother to Archelaus, reigned over Galilee.

Verse 23.—In Galilee, Joseph made Nazareth his dwelling-place. He had apparently lived there previously. Luke ii. 4. The prediction, in the precise form which it here takes, does not occur in the Old Testament. What then is the explanation? Possibly this: The name Nazareth is derived from Netser, a shoot, a scion. Now, in Is. xi. 1, the predicted Messiah is expressly called Netser—that is, "a shoot, sprout, of Jesse, a humble despised descendant of the decayed royal family." The same image of a shoot, sprout, branch, to represent Christ, occurs elsewhere. Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12.

A Nazarene was equivalent to being called a despised person, which character is attributed to the Messiah in the predictions of the Old Testament. The sense, thus, and not the language, is drawn by Matthew from the prophets. Joseph, accordingly, by returning to Nazareth for his abode, made Jesus a Nazarene, that a Scripture might be fulfilled. Nazareth was a lowly and secluded hamlet, situated among hills 400 or 500 feet high, that now present a somewhat sterile and forbidding aspect. The valley is very fertile, abounding in fruits. The modern village contains 3,000 or 4,000 inhabitants. The ill name which Nazareth bore was probably, though this is not certain, due to the comparatively low state of morals among the population. They attempted to kill him; they expelled him twice (for Luke iv. 16-29, and Matt. xiii. 54-58, re. late probably to different occurrences) from their borders; they were so wilful and unbelieving that he performed not many miracles among them (Matt. xiii. 58); and, finally, they compelled him to turn his back upon them, and reside at Capernaum." (Matt. iv. 13.)

The miraculous interventions of Divine Providence on behalf of the infant Jesus, strike us more, but are in fact no more wonderful than the ordinary providential measures by which, as Christ teaches, we are every one of us cared for by God with such minuteness of provision that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

The fulfillments of Scripture noted in this lesson teach us how exactly and how unexpectedly everything that happens, happens according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Say that you have a story of a child in danger, which you will tell after they have told you last Sunday's story. This naturally leads to thorough review.

Tell of the danger which threatened the new King; lead the children to wish there might be a warning call given.

Show that the greatest danger to a child is not of the body, but of the soul. Compare Satan to a hawk. If only children could be warned—if they could only hide from such danger!

If we trust Jesus we need not be afraid of anything. God keeps all his children as safely as he kept this baby King, who was his own Son. But note, when he sent the warning, Joseph believed and obeyed, and fled from danger to the place he was told of.

Shall we not praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that is to come?—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Answer to Enigma.

No. 52.

- 1. Rachel. 10. Timothy.
2. Esau. 11. Hezekiah.
3. David. 12. Eden.
4. Elijah.
5. Eve.
6. Moses. 13. Tekel.
7. Isaiah. 14. Isaac.
8. Noah. 15. Methuselah.
9. Gallilean. 16. Eternity.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 21. TOBACCO.
22. Gabriel and Michael.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 53.

The initials of the following names arranged in order, form an injunction of our Saviour, as recorded by John:

- 1. The city in which Timotheus was circumcised.
2. The city in which an angelsat under a tree.
3. The seventh son of Bani.
4. The overseer of David's fields.
5. A prince who was slain on a rook of the same name.
6. The person who planted the first vineyard.
7. The second son of Moses.
8. The father-in-law of Aaron.
9. The eldest son of Ishmael.
10. A tower built by the sons of Elpaal.
11. The king who sent his son to congratulate David.
12. One reproved by a prophet for unlawful marriage.
13. The month in which Nehemiah finished the wall of Jerusalem.
14. One of the cities of refuge.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.
No. 23. When did the simple mispronunciation of a word occasion a great sacrifice of human life?
24. Which was the only one of the Apostles whose death is recorded in the New Testament.

Booths' Department.

The Year's Farewell.

MRS. M. M. B. GOODWIN.

Autumn has lost her sunny smiles, Her brow is wet with tears, Her sandalled feet follow the path Of the departed years. Though robed right royally, she came In purple and in gold, Her faded garments, old and brown, Are torn in every fold.

With bountiful, gift-laden hands She knocked at Nature's door; Scat'ring her treasures far and wide, She's dying, old and poor. The wild wind sweeps her vacant halls, Her purple grapes are pressed, Her harvest-moon in splendor mild, Has faded in the west.

And while she shuts Time's iron gate With fingers cold and chill, She sees, through tears, King Winter set His watch-fires on the hill. Disrobed and pale, she falls asleep, Folded to earth's cold breast; The seal of silence on her lips— Eternal is her rest.

For some of us the Spring has passed— For some Summer is o'er— While others, gathering harvest-sheaves, Find Winter at the door. But Winter's cold, white mystery Will break, in loving tears, When we have climbed where angels stand, Above life's stormy years.

And if our ladder's golden rounds Are prayers and generous deeds; If, never faltering, we have tried To help the world's great needs; If, clambering up the mountain side— Our guide, the Morning Star— We've battled in Truth's sacred ranks, We'll find heaven's "gate ajar!"

Though with our gleanings tares are found, Or thorns, or withered leaves, God will accept our toil-worn grain From out the tear-stained sheaves. And though chill fingers spread the pall, If Love and Faith unite, A "harvest-home" our coming waits, Upon the "plains of light."

A Legend of the Northland.

(FOR THE CHILDREN.)

By PHOENIX CARY.

Away, away in the Northland, Where the hours of the day are few, And the nights so long in winter, They cannot sleep them through;

Where they harness the swift reindoor To the sledges when it snows, And yet the children look like bears' cubs, In their funny, furry clothes;

They tell them a curious story— I don't believe it's true— And yet you may learn a lesson If I tell the tale to you.

Once, when the good St. Peter Lived in the world below, And widely wandered preaching, Just as he did, you know—

He comes to the door of a cottage, In travelling round the earth, Where a little woman was making cakes And baking them on the hearth.

And, being faint with fasting, For the day was almost done, He asked her from her store of cakes To give him a single one.

So she made a very little cake, But as it baking lay, She looked at it, and thought it seemed Too large to give away.

Therefore she kneaded another, And still another one, But it looked when she turned it over As large as the first had done,

Then she took a tiny scrap of dough And rolled and rolled it flat, And baked it thin as a wafer, But she couldn't part with that.

For she said, "My cakes that seem too small When I eat of them myself, Are yet too large to give away," So she put them on the shelf.

Then good St. Peter grew angry, For he was hungry and faint; And surely such a woman as that Was enough to provoke a saint.

And he said "You are far too selfish To dwell in a human form To have both food and shelter, And fire to keep you warm."

"Now you shall build as the birds do, And shall get your scanty food By boring, and boring, and boring All day in the hard wood."

Then up she went through the chimney, Never speaking a word, And out of the top flew a woodpecker, For she was changed to a bird.

She had a scarlet cap on her head, And that was left the same, But all the rest of her clothes were burned Black as a coal in the flame.

And every country schoolboy Has seen her in the wood, Where she lives in the tree till this very day, Boring and boring for food.

And this is the lesson she teaches— Live not for yourself alone, Lest the needs you will not pity Shall one day be your own.

Give plenty of what is given to you; Listen to pity's call; Don't think the little you give is great, And the much you get is small.

Now, my little boy, remember that, And try to be kind and good When you see the woodpecker's sooty dress, And note her scarlet hood.

You mayn't be changed to a bird, the you live As selfish as you can; But you may be changed to a smaller thing— A mean and selfish man.

Finding "Girl" in the Bible.

An English town missionary, a short time ago, related a remarkable incident. There was a lodging-house in his district which he had long desired to enter, but was deterred from so doing by his friends who feared that his life would be thereby endangered. He became at length so uneasy that he determined to risk all consequences and try to gain admission. So one day he gave a somewhat timid knock at the door, in response to which a coarse voice roared out, "Who's there?" and at the same moment a vicious-looking woman opened the door and ordered the man of God away.

"Let him come in, and see who he is, and what he wants," growled out the same. The missionary walked in and bowed politely to the rough-looking man whom he had just heard speak, said:

"I have visited most of the houses in this neighborhood to read with and talk to the people about good things. I have passed your door as long as I feel I ought, for I wish also to talk with you and your lodgers."

"Are you what is called a town-missionary?"

"I am, sir," was the reply.

"Well, then," said the fierce-looking man, "sit down and hear what I am going to say. I will ask you a question out of the Bible. If you answer me right you may call at this house and read and pray with us or our lodgers as often as you like; but if you do not answer me right we will tear your clothes off your back and tumble you neck and heels into the street. Now what do you say to that? for I am a man of my word."

The missionary was perplexed, but at length quietly said:

"I will take you."

"Well, then," said the old man, here goes. Is the word girl in any part of the Bible? If so, where is it to be found, and how often? That is my question."

"Well, sir, the word girl is in the Bible! but only once, and to be found in the words of the Prophet Joel, iii. 3. "And shall a girl for wine that they might drink."

"Well," replied the man, "I am dead beat; I durst not have bet five pounds you could not have told." "And I could not have told yesterday," said the visitor. "For several days I have been praying that the Lord would open my way into this house, and this very morning, when reading the Scriptures in my family, I was surprised to find the word girl, and got the Concordance to see if it occurred again, and found it did not. And now, sir, I believe that God did know, and does know what will come to pass, and surely His hand is in this for my protection and your good."

The whole of the inmates were greatly surprised, and the incident has been overruled to the conversion of the man, his wife, and two of the lodgers.—American Wesleyan.

Charity gives itself riches, but covetousness hoards itself poor.