

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson II.—JANUARY 9.

THE SONG OF MARY.

Luke i. 46-55.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 51-55.

True to his purpose of setting forth Jesus as one like ourselves, Luke, after telling of the annunciation of John, tells of the annunciation of Jesus (Luke i. 26-38.) This was made to Mary, the Lord's mother, six months after John had been announced. It was made by Gabriel, who had brought the news of John's coming (vs. 19-26). Mary then left her home in Nazareth and went a journey of nearly one hundred miles to the hill-countries of Judea, probably to the city of Hebron, to visit and rejoice with Elisabeth over their promised sons. Their words of praise are given in vs. 42-55. Mary stayed with Elisabeth three months (vs. 56), or until about the time John was born.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."—Luke i. 46, 47.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Song of Mary, Luke i. 46-55.
T. The Song of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.
W. Thankfulness called for, Psa. cv. 1-15.
T. Christ Promised to Abraham, Gal. iii. 1-16.
F. Humanity of Jesus, Heb. ii. 1-15.
S. Divinity of Jesus, John i. 1-14.
S. Mary's Joy in her Expected Son, Luke i. 46-55.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 46: 1 Sam. ii. 1.
With vs. 47: Psa. xxxv. 9; Heb. iii. xviii.
With vs. 48: Psa. cxxxvi. 23; Mal. iii. 12; Matt. xi. 27.
With vs. 49: Gen. xvii. 1; Ps. cxi. 9.
With vs. 50: Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7; Psa. cxiii. 17.
With vs. 51: Psa. xcvi. 1; Isa. xl. 10; 1 Pet. v. 5.
With vs. 52: 1 Sam. ii. 6; Job v. 11.
With vs. 53: Ps. xxxiv. 10; Matt. v. 6; Rev. vii. 16, 17.
With vs. 54: Psa. xcvi. 3.
With vs. 55: Gen. xvii. 19; Gal. iii. 16.

MARY'S JOY IN HER EXPECTED SON.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Joy for Personal Blessings, Vss. 46-49. II. Joy for World-wide Blessings, Vss. 50-53. III. Joy for Covenant Blessings, Vss. 54, 55.

QUESTIONS.—What is the title of this lesson? What is its topic? What journey did Mary make to tell her joy? Trace it on the map of Palestine. With what words did Mary begin her song? (Golden Text). What occasions for joy are given in the outline?

I. Vss. 46-49.—Whom did Mary's soul magnify? What personal reasons for joy are in vs. 48, 49?
II. Vss. 50-53.—On whom is God's mercy? How hath he showed strength? Whom hath he put down? Whom exalted? Give illustration? Why may we rejoice with Mary in these same facts?

III. Vss. 54, 55.—With whom had God made a covenant? (vs. 55). Whom did God help in remembrance of this? Who is this servant? To whom else has help been extended? (Luke ii. 32).

NOTES.—Verses 46-49.—And Mary said. Elisabeth's poetic salutation was uttered "with a loud voice," under the excitement of a temporary inspiration. Mary's response was in a quieter mood, as of one more permanently imbued with the Spirit. My soul doth magnify, etc. Magnifies, in the Greek, has the place of emphasis—the first word of her song. The present tense denotes the continued action of praise. By her unconscious use of the phraseology of the Old Testament, she gives evidence of her familiarity with the Psalms, and the Song of Hannah. Unlike David and Hannah, she mingles no personal exaltation over enemies, in her triumphant ode. The spirit is one of grace and glory. Soul . . . spirit. Including the "spirit and soul and body" of 1 Thess. v. 22—the whole inner being. Every fibre charged with praise. Hath rejoiced. Suffused with joy by the announcement of the angel, or the sight of Elisabeth, who was to her the sign of the fulfillment of the promise. In God my Saviour. The one source of all true joy, as the sun is of light. God in

Christ, reconciling the world to himself. All other joys are evanescent. The low estate of his handmaiden. Not her humility, but her humble position. As in vs. 38, she here calls herself by a title which denotes her full surrender of herself to the Lord's will. Behold. Calls attention to the great contrast—the Lord's slave, yet honored above all. Blessed. Not worshipped, but in the coveted position of mother of the Messiah. There is no foundation here, or elsewhere, for the worship of Mary. He that is mighty. Mary sings of a creative power, needed to fulfill the promise. Also, of a holiness, which characterized the incarnate Christ.

Verses 50-53.—His mercy. The source and substance of the great blessing (vs. 54.) On them that fear him. No longer exclusive. Not exhausted in its bestowal upon her. Enough for all. From generation to generation. To the utmost, or most remote, generation. The mighty. The dynasties, princes—such as Herod and Cæsar. See fulfillment of Ezek. xxi. 27. Them of low degree. Such as Elisabeth and Mary. Compare the parable of the Parisee and Publican. He hath filled the hungry, etc. Contrast Ahab, and the woman of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii 1-14); the leper, and the young ruler (Matt. viii. 1-4; xix. 16-22.)

Verses 54, 55.—In remembrance of his mercy. The coming of Christ was not in judgment, but in mercy. It was the fulfillment of the great promise to Abraham, and to his seed.

Mary seems to stand side by side with Abraham in the largeness and unquestioning nature of her faith.

We have as much reason to magnify the Lord as she. He has done "great things" for us, also; and through the same Lord Jesus Christ.

True joy in God, like Mary's, is unselfish, and is all the greater when God's grace is extended to others.

Mercy and judgment go with the gospel. The hungry are filled, the rich sent empty away. Only Christ can save the sinner.

There is not a word of sanction, either here, or anywhere else in the Bible, for the idolatrous worship of her whom the Romanists call "the Blessed Virgin." While she was, as we know, beautifully devout, she was one of our fallen race, and no more immaculate than any other daughter of Adam. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Mary's faith was pure, simple-hearted, and unquestioning. Quite as beautiful was her humility.

Four thousand years before, it had been said, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. The Messiah was to come—he was to be of woman born.

If Mary had reason for rapturous joy, even so have we—and every one of us can join her song of triumphant praise.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Mary's song is here in the Bible! Mary was so happy that she wanted to sing! An angel had come down from heaven to bring her good news! When Mary first saw the angel, and heard him speak, she was afraid; but the angel said: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God." This meant that God was much pleased with Mary.

The angel said to Mary, "You shall have a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great. He shall be called the Son of God."

Tell of the visit to Elisabeth, reviewing, briefly, the last lesson. Learn Mary's song? Explain Golden Text. The rest of the song, like many other songs, is beyond the children's understanding.

Sing a song of praise to God? Simple and cheerful. Ask the children to sing it, very often, during the week. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

A party of scapegraces, meeting a pious old man named Samson, one of them exclaimed, "Ah, now we're safe! We'll take Samson along with us, and then, should we be set upon by a thousand Philistines, he'll slay them all!" "My young friend," quietly responded the old man, "to do that I should have to borrow your jaw-bone."

Youth's Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 105.

A NEW YEAR'S DAY SCENE.

Here is a place of desolation on the side of a high mountain, peak still rises above peak, whilst below is a series of valleys stretching on as far the eye can reach. All vegetation has been taken off, and on the surface barren and preceptors rocks appear all around. Boards all covered with pitch are lying on every hand. An aged man is moving about giving commands to three men who look up to him with reverence, and obey his every injunction with great readiness. Not a habitation is seen or indication of other human being any where near. No signs of life but from within the just unroofed building, the lowing of cattle is heard, and a general anxiety evident for food and freedom.

Find such a scene in the Book of Genesis.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 146. Form a Diamond of these words:
1. The head of a pin.
2. A deep hole.
3. A man's name.
4. Land used for grazing.
5. Having many pictures.
6. A traveller.
7. Quick.
8. To take food.
9. Fifty.
147. TRANSLITERATION. Change one letter at a time, and go from West to East in four words.
Soup to Fish in thirteen words.
Road to Rail in ten words.
Cat to Dog in six words.
Boot to Shoe in four words.
Hash to Milk in seven words.
148. BIBLE QUESTION ENIGMA.
1. What was the city of Asia Minor whence Paul took ship for Rome?
2. Who was the fourth or the last of the seven deacons chosen by the twelve apostles?
3. What was the name of a certain orator who misnamed Paul "a pestilent fellow"?
4. Think of a city of Cilicia where, as Paul informs Timothy by letter, he suffered "persecutions and afflictions."
5. What Christian convert diligently sought out and ministered to Paul in his bonds?
6. What was the native place of "an old disciple" who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, and entertained him there?
7. In what language did Paul address the people from the castle stairs?

The initials of these seven names give the name of a city where the Apostle of the Gentiles preached, and in which the disciples were first called Christians.

Answers next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 104.

CHRISTMAS BIBLE EXERCISE.

- 1. "Watchers"—Shepherds. Luke ii. 8.
2. "Wonder"—The Star. Matt. ii. 2.
3. "Place"—Bethlehem. Matt. ii. 9.
4. "Voice of Solace"—"Fear not." Luke ii. 10.
5. "Chorus"—Of the Heavenly host. Luke ii. 13, 14.
6. "All Nations &c."—A light &c. Luke ii. 32.
7. "Tokens"—in a manger &c. Luke ii. 12.
8. "Source of life"—"In him was life." John i. 4.
9. "Crowns." Rev. xix. 12.
10. "Banners." Psalm xx. 5.
11. "Realms." Isaiah ix. 6, 7.
12. "Surety." Luke xxiv. 26.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 143. Diamond of words.
B
C A T
F O R U M
C O R O N E T
B A R O M E T E R
T U N E M A N
M E T A L
T E N
R
144. BEHEADINGS.
Clock, lock; Bell, ell; Two, wo; Rin, in; Skin, Rin.
145. HOUR GLASS OF WORDS.
C a p t a i n
c h o i r
o r e
N
b a g
a d d e r
C o l o n e l

Brain workers will do well to consider the advice of the Lancet that "When the mental and nervous parts of the frame are weary, or even exhausted, it is not a time for work." Daily physical exercise is essential to health, but when there is a heavy mental labour the exercise should be moderate and taken before, not after, the day's toil.

My Sister's Grapes.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

Perhaps you might not think Uncle Dick a "gentleman"—Aunt Emma did not, I know, though she kept her mind to herself, being his brother's widow, and the prudent mother of many children. Uncle Dick lived with them; that is, if he could be said to live anywhere, being always on the move, never liking to stay long in one place, and somewhat restless-minded, as those are who have passed all their life in rambling about the world. A "rolling stone" he certainly was, though he could scarcely be said to have gathered no moss, as he had amassed two fortunes, one after the other: having lost the first, he was now enjoying the second in his own harmless but rather eccentric way.

I doubt if Aunt Emma really liked him, yet she was always very civil to him, her chief complaint being that he never would "take his position in the world"; that is, he avoided her balls, made himself scarce at her dinner parties, and no persuasion could ever induce him to exhibit his long, thin, gaunt figure, his brown hands and face, in evening clothes. What a "guy" he would have looked in them! as we boys always agreed, and sympathized with him, and not with Aunt Emma. But in his own costume we admired him immensely. His shooting-jacket, Knickerbockers, and Panama hat were to us the perfection of comfort and elegance.

As to his cleverness, that also was a disputed point with some folk. But we had never any doubt at all. And perhaps we were right. "A fool and his money are soon parted," says the proverb. But when they part to meet again—that is, when a man can bear the loss of one fortune, and set to work to make another—the chances are (without any exaggerated Mammon-worship I say) that he is not a fool. "Yes, I have really made two fortunes," said Uncle Dick, as we sat beguiling a sunshiny day, when the fish refused to bite, by plying him with innumerable questions, till at last he "rose" like a trout at a fly. "How old was I when I lost the first one? Well, about twenty-five. Yes, I remember it happened on my birthday, Michaelmas-day."

"Happened all in one day?" some of us inquired.

"Ay, in a day, an hour, a minute," said Uncle Dick, with his peculiar smile, half sad, half droll, as if he saw at once all the fun and all the pathos of life. "And now I remember it was not in the day, but in the middle of the night. I went to sleep a rich man; by daylight I was a beggar. Any more questions, boys?"

Of course we rained them upon him by the dozen. He sat composedly, watching his float swim down the stream, and answered none for ever so long: Uncle Dick had, when he chose, an unlimited capacity for silence.

"Yes," he said at length, "it was one night in the middle of the Atlantic on the deck of a sinking ship. There's a saying, boys, about gaining the whole world and losing one's own soul. Well, I gained them my soul, though I lost my fortune. And it was all through my sister's grapes."

Now Uncle Dick was in the habit of talking nonsense—at least Aunt Emma considered it such. In his long solitude he was accustomed to let his thoughts run underground, as it were, for a good while, when they would suddenly crop up again, and he would make a remark, apropos of nothing, which greatly puzzled matter-of-fact people, or those who liked elegant small-talk, of which he had absolutely none.

"Your sister's grapes?" repeated one of us, with great astonishment. "Then you had a sister? Where is she now?" Uncle Dick looked up at the blue sky—intensely blue it was that day, as deep and measureless as infinity. "Where is she? I don't know: I wish I did. But He knows, and I shall find out some time." Then he added, briefly, "My sister Lily died of consumption when she was fifteen, and I about ten years old."

"And what about her grapes? Is it a story—a true story?"

"Quite true to me, though all might not believe it. Some might even laugh at it, and I don't like to be laughed at. No, I don't mind; it can't harm me.

I'll tell you, boys, if you like to hear. It may be a good lesson for some of you."

"We did not much care for 'lessons,' but we liked a story; so we begged Uncle Dick to tell us this one from the very beginning."

"No, not from the beginning, which could benefit neither you nor me," said Uncle Dick, gravely. "I'll take up my tale from the point I mentioned, when I found myself at midnight on the deck of the Colorado—Australian steamer, bound for London, fast going down. And she went down."

"You with her?"

"Not exactly, or how could I be here sitting quietly fishing? which seems odd when I think of the hurly burly of that night. It had come quite suddenly after a long spell of fair weather, which we found so dull that we began drinking, smoking, gambling, and even fighting now and then; for we were a rough lot, mostly 'diggers' who like myself had worked a 'claim,' or half a claim, at Ballarat—worked it so well that they soon found they had made a fortune, so determined to go to Europe and spend it."

"I thought I would do the same. I was quite young, yet I had amassed as much money as many a poor fellow—a clergyman, or a soldier, or an author—can scrape together in a lifetime; and I wanted to spend it in seeing life. Hitherto I had seen nothing at all—in civilization, that is. I never had the least bit of 'fun,' until I ran away from home seven years before; and very little fun after, for it was all hard work. Now, having been so lucky as to make my fortune, I meant to use it in enjoying myself."

"I had never enjoyed home very much. My people, good as they were, were rather dull, or at least I thought them so. They always bothered me about 'duty,' till I hated the very sound of the word. They called my fun mischief; my mischief they considered a crime; so I slipped away from them, and after a letter or two I gradually let them go, or fancied they were letting me go, and forgot almost their very existence. I might have been a waif and stray drifted ashore from the sea or dropped from the clouds, so little did I feel as if I had any one belonging to me. My relations, even my parents, had all melted out of my mind; for weeks I sometimes never remembered that I had a father, or mother, or brothers. Lily had been my only sister, and she died."

Uncle Dick stopped a moment, then continued:

"I don't wish, boys, to put myself forward as worse than I was, or better. People find their own level pretty well, in this world. It's no good either to puff yourself up as a saint, or go about crying yourself down as a miserable sinner. In either case you think a great deal too much about yourself, which is as harmful a thing as can happen to any man."

"Certainly I was no worse than my neighbors, and no better. I liked everybody, and most people liked me. I troubled nobody, and nobody troubled me. I meant to go on that principle when I got back into civilization, to spend my money, and have my fling. Possibly I might run down to see 'the old folks at home,' whom we diggers were rather fond of singing about; but we seldom thought about them. At least I never did, and they formed no part of my motive for coming to England. I came simply and solely to amuse myself."

"I had just turned in with the rest—not drunk, as a good many of us were that night, but 'merry.' One hour after, we turned out, and stood facing one another—and facing death. A sudden hurricane had risen; one of our masts had gone overboard; we had sprung a leak; and work as we might at the pumps, the Captain said he believed we should sink or go to pieces before morning. He had been drunk too, which perhaps accounted for our disaster, in a good sound ship and the safe open sea; but he was sober enough now. He did his best, and when hope was over, said he should 'go to the bottom with his ship.' And he went. I took his watch to his widow: he gave it me before he jumped overboard, poor fellow."

"Well boys, what was I going to tell you? I forgot," said Uncle Dick, drawing his long brown hand across his forehead. "Oh, about the ship Colorado

going down, fighting for t out of them, chance. W in the starlig waves—grou pily there wa some paraly ing with ter ing, others which we all hoped to go—we ever tho of life, dea else's. "People s out human 'every man not God, b found it so young and some half m bags, full o tied round hands, eage their gold, and thing and e ble! Grad of the feet would harc nothing of longer trie offered a q their gold them. But "For me young and death befor strange. I but I was a fish, brutat me; they l true color self for hav I didn't lik with such felt hard e all. "The bi carried in rest of m Most of u to get wit was impos go overbo praying, 'luggage, not parted bottom to that exact thought, "How one asked "I don't (Uncle Di now and t or eight t We boy a lot of bottom of "Yes, will not soul?" or me might knew I h you see haps." We sta oddly so him to c "Well turn boat, for ed. Bei to let t besides, as long terminate down wit his wate wife, an quiet, w all that, or as if son, an be drow —drow fortune "Hon my lip said it, which—my mo through boys, w ing wo "Richa grapes "It's someth only t saved s bunch