

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson I.—JANUARY 1, 1882.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL.

Mark i. 1-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me."—Mal. iii. 1.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Mark i. 1-13.
T. The Forerunner Predicted, Mal. iii. 1-6; iv. 4-6.
W. Character of the Jewish Nation, John viii. 33-47.
T. John's Account of Himself, John i. 15-28.
F. John's Account of Jesus, [25-36. John i. 29-34; iii.
S. Baptism of Jesus, Matt. chap. 3.
S. Temptation of Jesus, Matt. iv. 1-11.

PREPARATION FOR THE SAVIOUR TO WORK.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. By John going before, Vss. 1-8. II. By Baptism, Vss. 9-11. III. By overcoming Temptation, Vss. 12, 13.

QUESTIONS.—What does Mark omit? In what sense was John's work the "beginning of the Gospel"? What title does John have? ["The Baptist" —i. e. the Immerser.]
Where was the home of Jesus? Did he need repentance or forgiveness? Why did he submit to baptism? (Matt. iii. 15) What is the act of baptism? How did baptism prepare Jesus for his work? [A. By identifying him with his people, by the Father's testimony, and by the Spirit's power given to him.]
Who was the tempter? Could a sinless person be tempted? [Yes; Adam and Eve were.] How did his victory prepare him for his work? [Having himself overcome Satan, he was qualified to deliver others from his power.] How may this be a comfort to us? What do we learn of the ministry of angels?

NOTES.—Verse 1. Gospel; good news.—Jesus: "Saviour," his personal name.—Christ: "the anointed one"—the promised one appointed of God, the "Messiah."—Son of God: recognizing his divinity and his character as incarnate and sent of God. Beginning: like preface to a book.
Verse 2. Prepare, etc.: like making and mending roads for a king to travel. John was to prepare for Christ's work by calling the Jews to repentance and expectation.
Verse 3. Baptize: immerses, the one exact meaning of the Greek word. Wilderness: wild or open country. Baptism of repentance, etc.: those baptized thereby professed repentance and pledged themselves to a changed mind and life; and (if sincere) were promised remission [i. e. forgiveness] of sins.
Verse 5.—All the land, etc.: great numbers from these different parts of Palestine. Cf. [this means "compare"] Matt. iii. 5.—In the river: showing that baptism is immersion, so in v. 9. Confessing their sins: in words or by the very act of baptism.
Verse 6. Camel's hair: woven into the coarsest cloth.—Girdle of a skin: leathern belt.—Wild honey: of bees, plentiful in the wilderness.—Locusts: dried and eaten as at this day by the Arabs.
Verse 7. Shoes—i. e. sandals: mere soles tied to the foot. Loosening these was the work of the humblest slave.
Verse 8. With water . . . with the Holy Ghost: should read: In water . . . in the Holy Spirit: John baptized men unto repentance; Jesus would bring such under the power of the Holy Spirit and fit them for his kingdom.
Verse 9. Nazareth: some months after John began his ministry.
Verse 10. Out of the water: as persons immersed now do.—He saw: Jesus saw. So did John (John i. 32)—Opened: there seemed to be a rent or opening in the sky. The dove was a visible appearance.
Verse 11. A voice: this was the voice of God the Father. Cf. Luke ix. 35.
Verse 12. Driveth: led by a strong impulse. Probably Jesus went to prepare for his work by fasting and prayer.
Verse 13. Satan: ("the adversary"), the devil. He hoped to conquer the "second Adam" as he did the first, in

which case all would have been lost for him and for us.—With the wild beasts: the first mark of conflict, a sign of being far from human help.—Ministered: as once to Elijah. Cf. 1 Kings xix. 6-8; Matt. iv. 11.

Special Subjects.—Moral, political, and religious condition of the Jews at the time of Christ's first coming. Relation of John's baptism to the Gospel Dispensation. Relation of baptism and remission. Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Possibility and reality of the temptation of Jesus. What was at stake in it. Satan.

Months' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 150.

A New Testament Scene. What is it? and where is it recorded?
In an upper room, brilliantly lighted, are gathered a company of believers. In their midst stands a man, of small stature but impressive bearing earnestly addressing them, and as he waxes more and more eloquent in his grand theme, the moments fly past unheeded until the midnight hour is near. Upon one of the window seats is a young man, who but a short time before was deeply interested in the words as they fell from those impassioned lips, he ceases to listen, his head droops lower and lower upon his bosom, until at last, he is in the "image of death." He drops from his seat down three stories and is killed.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 279. Make square words of—1. a loud musical instrument; 2. twisted hemp; 3. a deadly tree; 4. a combination.
280. 1. An instrument of torture; 2. a measure of land; 3. a high cliff; 4. small barrels.
281. 1. Head coverings; 2. an open space; 3. a horse and carriage; 4. alike.
282. Behead short and thick, and leave a small vessel. Behead a fish, and leave a quadruped. Behead one of two born at one time, and leave to gain. Behead to use for covering, and leave the organ of hearing. Behead a comfortable state, and leave a member of the body.
283. 1. How many books are contained in the New Testament?
2. How many chapters?
3. How many verses?
4. How many words?
5. How many letters?
6. Which is the middle chapter, and shortest, in the Bible?
7. Which is the middle verse in the Bible?
8. Which is the middle book of the Old Testament?
9. Which the middle chapter?
10. Which the middle verse?
11. Which the least verse?
12. Which is the middle book of the New Testament?
13. Which the middle chapters?
14. Which the middle verse?
15. Which the least verse?
16. What two chapters in the Old Testament are alike?
17. What verse in the Old Testament has all the letters of the alphabet except one, and what is the missing letter?
18. What verse in the New Testament has all the letters except one, and what letter is missing?

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 149.

- 1. E de n. Gen. ii. 7, 8; iii. 22-24.
2. A me n. Ps. lxxii. 19; Re. v. 14.
3. S tri p. Numb. xxii. 26; 1 Sam. 4. D us t. Gen. ii. 7; Eccl. xii. 7. [xxxii. 8. DEMETRIUS. Acts xix. 24, to the end.

BIBLE ENIGMA—No. 150.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath."—Prov. xv. 1.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

278. He art, let he, ring let, her-ring, ant her, ten-ant, kit ten.

How often do we look upon God as our last and feeblest resource. We go to Him because we have nowhere else to go.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts." I have always seen God justify Himself in the long run; I am continually discovering that I misunderstood Him and murmured when He was kindest.—Lacordaire.

A good conscience is a continual feast; and a mind at peace through Christ is the antepast of Heaven.

Fame has no necessary conjunction with praise; it may exist without the breath of a word; it is a recognition of excellence which must be felt, but need not be spoken. Even the envious must feel it, and hate in silence.

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

Christmas Story.

[From St. Nicholas.]

AN ANGEL IN AN ULSTER.

BY WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

Well, sir, I am sorry; but I've done the best I could for you."

It is the conductor of the night express on the Eastern Railroad who is speaking; and the passenger, to whom his remark is addressed, stands with watch in hand, near the door of the car, as the train draws into the Boston station.

"I do not doubt it" is the answer. "You can not be blamed for the delay. The other train must have left the Western station already."

"Undoubtedly; the time is past, and they always start on time."

"And there is no train that connects through to Cincinnati before to-morrow morning?"

"No!" "Well, that settles it. Thank you."

Mr. Haliburton Todd steps down from the platform of the car, and walks slowly past the row of beckoning and shouting hackmen. He is too good a philosopher to be angry with the freshest that delayed the train, but there is a shade of disappointment on his face, and a trace of moisture in his eye. He is a wholesome looking man of forty-five, with grayish hair and beard, blue eyes, and a ruddy countenance. Probably he is never much given to grinning, but just now his face is unusually grave; nevertheless, it is a kind face; under its sober mask there is a world of good nature. In short, he is just the sort of man that a shrewd girl of twelve would pick out for an uncle. If any one thinks that is not high praise, I should like to have him try his hand at commendation.

There are, indeed, quite a number of boys and girls to whom Uncle Hal is both a saint and a hero. At that Christmas party, in the home of his sister in the Western city to which he has been hurrying, these boys and girls are to be assembled. All the married brothers and sisters, with their families, will be there. But it is of no use now for him to try to join them. The feast will be ended, and the circle will be broken, before he can reach Cincinnati. So he strolls out of the station and up the street. No, he will not take a hack nor a horse-car; happy people may consent to be carried; those whose minds are troubled would better go afoot. He will walk off his disappointment.

He trudges along the narrow streets; the drays and the express wagons, laden with all sorts of boxes and parcels, are clattering to and fro; porters, large and small, are running with bundles, big and little; the shops are crowded with eager customers. Mr. Haliburton Todd is too good a man to be dismal long in the midst of a scene like this. "What hosts of people," he says to himself, "are thinking and working with all their might to-day to make other people happy to-morrow! And how happy they all are themselves, to-day! We always say that Christmas is the happiest day in the year; but is it? Is n't it the day before Christmas?"

So thinking, he passes at the window of a small print shop, when his attention is caught by the voices of two children, standing in the hall at the foot of the stairs leading to the stories above. In the sign beside the door-way he reads, "Jackman & Company, Manufacturers of Ladies' Underwear." The children are a girl of twelve and a boy of ten, neatly but plainly dressed; a troubled look is on their bright faces. "How much, Ruby?" asks the boy. "Only seven dollars," answers the girl, choking back a sob. "There were four dozen of the night dresses, you know, and the price was two dollars a dozen; but the man said that some of them were not well made, so he kept back a dollar."

"The man lied," says Ben, "and I'll go up and tell him so."

"Oh, no," answers Ruby, "that would n't do any good. He would n't mind you, and he might not give us any more work. But the work was well done, if we did help; for you run the machine beautifully, and mamma says that my button holes are every bit as good as hers. Just think of it! Only seven dollars for two weeks' hard work of all three of us!"

"We can't have the turkey," says Ben, sadly.

"Oh, no. I found a nice young one down at the corner store that we could get for a dollar and a half, but we must lay by two dollars for the rent, you know; and there'll be coal to buy next week. I'm sure mamma will think we can't afford it."

"Come on, then," says Ben, bestowing a farewell kick upon the iron sign of Jackman & Company.

Mr. Haliburton Todd has forgotten all about his own disappointment in listening to the more serious trouble of these two children. As they walk up the street, he follows them closely, trying to imagine the story of their lives. They stop now and then for a moment to look into the windows of the toy-stores, and to admire the sweet wonders of the confectioners, but they do not tarry long. Presently, the eyes of Mr. Todd are caught by a large theater-bill, announcing the Oratorio of the Messiah, at Music Hall, Tuesday even, December 24, by the Handel and Haydn Society. Mr. Lang is to play the great organ. Theodore Thomas's orchestra is to assist, and the soloists are Miss Thursby and Miss Cary, and Mr. Whitney and Mr. Sims Reeves.

"Correct!" says Mr. Haliburton Todd, aloud. He knows now what he will do with the coming evening. It is long since his passion for music has been promised such a gratification.

While he pauses, he notes that Ruby and Ben are scanning with eager eyes the same bill-board. "Rather remarkable children," he says to himself, "to care for an oratorio. If it were a minstrel show, I should n't wonder."

"Would n't I like to go?" says Ruby. "Would n't I?" echoes Ben, with a low whistle.

"Don't you remember," says the girl, "the night Papa and Mamma took us to hear Nilsson? Miss Cary was there, you know, and she sang this:

"Birds of the night that softly call, Winds in the night that strangely sigh"

It is a sweet and sympathetic voice that croons the first strain of Sullivan's lullaby.

"I remember it," says Ben. "Mamma used to sing it afterward, pretty near as well as she did. And don't you remember that French chap that played the violin? Blue Tom, they call him, or some such name."

"Vieuxtemps," laughs Ruby, who knows a little French.

"Yes, that's it. But could n't he make the old fiddle dance, though?" And the boy tilts his basket against his shoulder, and executes upon it an imaginary roudade with an imaginary bow. "We used to have good times at home, did n't we—when Papa played the violin and Mamma the piano?" Ben goes on.

"Don't!" pleads Ruby, turning, with a great sob, from the bright promise of the bill-board.

The two children walk on in silence for a few moments.—Mr. Haliburton Todd sits close behind them. Ruby has resolutely dried her tears, but her thoughts are still with the great singers, and the voice of the wonderful Swede is ringing through her memory, for presently Mr. Todd hears her singing low:

"Angels ever bright and fair, Take, oh, take me to your care!"

"Well, my child," he says in a low tone, "I don't think that angels are apt to have gray hairs in their whiskers, nor to wear ulsters; but there's an old fellow about my size who would like to be an angel just now for your sake."

While he is talking thus to himself, the children turn into the hall of a tenement house. Mr. Haliburton Todd glances after them, and sees them enter a room on the first landing. He walks on a few steps slowly, hesitates, then quickly turns back. In a moment he is knocking at the door which had been opened for the children. The knock is answered by the boy.

"I beg your pardon, my little man," says Mr. Todd. "I am a stranger to you; but I should like to see your mother if she is not engaged."

"Come in, sir," says a voice within. It is the voice of a lady. Her face is pale and anxious, but her manner is quiet and self-possessed.

"It is a curious errand that brings me, madam," says Mr. Haliburton Todd; "but I trust you will pardon my bold-

ness and grant my request. These children of yours chanced to be standing with me in front of the same placard announcing the oratorio to-night; and I heard enough of what they said to know that they have a rare appreciation of good music. I have come in to see if you will let me take them to the Music Hall, this evening."

"Oh, Mamma!" cries Ben.

Ruby's eyes plead, but the mother's face is grave. "Your offer is extremely kind, sir," she says at length slowly; "and the thing you propose would give my children great pleasure; but—"

"You do not know me," Mr. Todd supplies. "That is true; and of course a wise mother would not commit her children to the care of an entire stranger. Here's my card.—" Todd & Templeton, Mattawamkeag, Maine,—but that proves nothing. However, I'm not going to give it up so. Let me see; I wonder if I know anybody that you know in this big city. Who is your minister?"

"We attend, at present, St. Mathew's Church, of which Mr. Brown is rector."

"What is his first name?" "John, I think."

"John Robinson Brown?" "Yes; that is the name."

"Correct!" ejaculates Mr. Todd, triumphantly, with a distinct hyphen between the two syllables of his favorite interjection; "that fixes it. What luck this is! I know your minister perfectly. He has been up in our woods fishing every summer for five years, and we are the best of friends. Can you tell me his residence?"

"I know," cries Ben. He lives next door to the Church, on Chaucer Street."

"All right. Let the boy run up to his house after dinner, and see whether Mr. Brown indorses me. I'll drop in on him this morning. If he says so, you'll let the children go with me to-night?"

"I know no reason," answers the mother, "why they may not go. You are very kind."

"Kind to myself, that's all. But I shall be obliged to ask your name, madam."

"Johnson."

"Thank you Mrs. Johnson. I will call for the children at half past seven. Good morning."

Mr. Haliburton Todd bows himself out with a beaming face, and leaves sunshine behind him. He pauses a moment on the landing. The door of the room adjoining the Johnsons' stands open, and he observes that the room was vacant. He steps in and finds a glazier setting a pane of glass. It is a pleasant room, with an open fire-place; the rear parlor-chamber of an old-fashioned house, and it has been newly papered and painted. It communicates with the sitting-room where the children and their mother live.

"Is this room rented?" he asks the glazier.

"Guess not."

"Where is the agent?"

"Number seven, Court street."

"Thank you!" Mr. Haliburton Todd glances around the room again, nods decisively, and hurries down the stairs.

What becomes of him for the next hour we will not inquire. A man is entitled to have a little time to himself, and it is not polite even in stories, to be prying into all the doings of our neighbors.

The next glimpse we get of him, he is sitting in the study of the rector of St. Mathew's, explaining to that gentleman what he wishes to do for these two little parishioners of his.

"Just like you," cries the minister.

"But who are the children?"

"Their name is Johnson, and they live in a tenement house on Denison street, number forty five."

"Ah, yes. Their father was the master of a bark in the African trade, and he was lost on the west coast a year and a half ago. Nothing was ever known of his fate, excepting that a portion of the vessel bearing its name, 'Ruby,' was washed ashore, somewhere in Angola, I think. They had a home of their own, bought in flush times, and mortgaged for half its value, but in the shrinkage everything was swept away. They have lived in this tenement now for nearly a year, supporting themselves by sewing. I suspect they are poor enough, but they are thoroughly independent; it is hard to get a chance to do anything for them. You seem to have outflanked them."

"Oh, no; I'm not much of a strategist;