

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VI.—FEBRUARY 6.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

Luke ii. 40-52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 48-52.

Luke tells of Anna, another holy person, who when the babe Jesus was in the temple recognized him as the Christ (Luke ii. 36-38). He then passes over the visit of the wise men, the rage and cruelty of Herod, and the flight into Egypt, all of which followed the events of the last lesson, and mentions the return to Galilee and Nazareth, at that point coinciding with Matthew's account (Luke ii. 39; Matt. ii. 19-23). Luke next presents the facts of the present lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."—Luke ii. 40.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Boyhood of Jesus, Luke ii. 40-52.
T. The Infancy of Jesus, Matt. ii. 1-23.
W. The Passover Instituted, Exodus xii. 3-20.
T. Jesus at the Passover, John ii. 13-25.
F. Love of the Word, Psa. cxix. 97-112.
S. Christ's Little Ones, Matt. xviii. 1-10.
S. Jesus the True Son of Man, Luke ii. 40-52.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 41: Ex. xxiii. 14-17; Deut. xvi. 1.
With vs. 46: Isa. xl. 1-4.
With vs. 47: Matt. vii. 28; Mark i. 22; John vii. 15.
With vs. 49: Psa. xl. 8; John ii. 16; iv. 34; vi. 38; viii. 29.
With vs. 50: Luke ix. 45; xviii. 34.
With vs. 51: Gen. xxxvii. 11; Dan. vii. 28.
With vs. 52: 1 Sam. ii. 26; Prov. iii. 4; Acts ii. 47; Rom. xiv. 18.

JESUS THE TRUE SON OF MAN.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Growing, Vss. 40-52. II. Learning, Vss. 41-50. III. Serving, Vs. 51.

QUESTIONS.—What was the title of the last lesson? Whom did Simeon recognize the babe Jesus to be? Upon what journeys was Jesus taken between the time of the last lesson and of this? What is the title of the present lesson? How old was Jesus at this time? What is the topic of this lesson?

I. Vss. 40-52.—Verses 40 and 52 specify four facts concerning the growth of Jesus; what are they? What is meant by these statements? To what part of Jesus' life does vs. 40 specially refer? To what vs. 52? For boys of what age, then, is the boy Jesus a model? For whom else is he a fit model? How may we grow in wisdom? How in favor with God?

II. Vss. 41-50.—What fact shows that the parents of Jesus were excellent people? What shows that they trained Jesus in the right way? What lesson may the boys of to-day learn from this example? What journey did they make to reach the temple? What of his answer to his mother? What did this answer mean? To what Father did he refer? What business of his Father had Jesus then to do? What business of God's can boys now do? (John vi. 29).

III. Vs. 51.—What three facts concerning Jesus are stated in vs. 51? To what labor did Jesus devote himself at Nazareth? (Mark vi. 3.) What does his subjection to his parents teach us?

Special Topics.—The Passover and customs of attendance; Jesus among the doctors; the dawn of Jesus' consciousness of his mission; the Father's business; the wonderment of Joseph and Mary at the strange acts and words of Jesus; Jesus' home-life at Nazareth; the growth of Jesus—in what respects; biblical study by the young; attendance of the young at religious services.

NOTES.—Verse 40.—The child grew: this verse relates what occurred before he was twelve years old; vs. 52 what occurred after that period. Waxed: grew. Spirit . . . wisdom: spiritual and mental advance. Grace of God: tokens of divine favor.

Verse 41.—Jerusalem: "possession or vision of peace." Every year: males only were required to attend, but devout women often went. Joseph and Mary habitually did this.

Verse 43.—Fulfilled the days: one for the Passover proper, and seven days of

unleavened bread (Ex. xxiii. 14, 15). Jesus tarried: charmed by what he heard, and not missed in the great friendly company of pilgrims.

Verse 44.—A day's journey: perhaps six or eight miles only.

Verse 46.—After three days: the third day (Mark viii. 31). The first day they missed him; the second they returned inquiring; the next they found him. The doctors: the teachers of the law, who doubtless were charmed with the boy. Hearing . . . asking: he listened, and asked when he would learn more. A model for Sunday-school scholars.

Verse 47.—Astonished: at his ability to understand and to push investigation.

Verse 48.—Amazed: this employment was so unexpected, even in one of his peculiar devoutness. Son, why, etc.: words of tenderness, yet implying reproach. Thy father: so reputed to be, and so before the law.

Verse 49.—How is it, etc.: not implying reproach, but rather wonder that they did not appreciate the destiny dawning so clearly upon him. Wist ye not: know ye not. My father: contrast with "thy father" (vs. 48.) Business: studying it in his house. Here he should have been sought, not at the roadside or elsewhere.

Verse 51.—Nazareth: "a shoot, a scion;" a village of Galilee, about seventy miles from Jerusalem. Subject: obeyed and served.

Verse 52.—Stature: or "age." Favor with God: his human life was increasingly pleasing to God, and men too, were compelled to approve it.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

The visit of the wise men, the flight into Egypt, and the return to the old home in Nazareth all happened after the events of the last lesson. Jesus obeyed his parents, and grew in body, mind, and spirit, for the grace of God was upon him. He never did wrong, but was called the "holy child Jesus." When he was twelve years old he went with his parents to Jerusalem, to the Passover. They were there eight days; then they joined a party and started for home. Jesus stayed behind, but his father and mother thought that he was with some of the party; when they stopped to rest at night, they could not find him. So they turned back to Jerusalem, looking for him.

On the third day they went to the temple, and found him with some learned men who taught the law. There, sitting amongst these doctors, answering wisely their questions, and asking them hard ones which they could not answer, was the lost child.

Joseph and Mary were astonished at his words, but, Mary said, "Why have you treated us in this way? We have sought you for three days." Then Jesus said, "How is it you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" But he went home obediently with them. Eighteen years passed away, and we are only told of his obedience and how he grew in wisdom as well as in size.

Some of the rooms around on the outside of the temple were used as sort of class-rooms, where learned men taught boys who were to become scribes and teachers. There was little learning from books; the master told things to the boys, they asked questions of him. Perhaps Jesus asked and answered questions concerning things which the prophets had said of himself, yet they knew him not.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Bonths' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 109.

1. A judge, prophetess, minstrel, and "Mother" in Israel.
2. A servant who deserted his master, but coming under the power of the Gospel, was reinstated in the favour and service both of man and God.
3. A Moabitess whose love for her mother-in-law, though great, was less devoted than that of Ruth.
4. The first, though less familiar name, by which Moses' father-in-law is introduced to us.

The initial letters of these names give a word which presents our Saviour as the true means of access to the living pastures.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

159. Make a triangle of the following words:

A miniature tree; a woman's name; weighed; a unit; two thirds of a large body of water; the remaining third.

160. Make a square of words:

Disposed to give; a thought; not far off; without light.

161. A triangle of Words:

To perceive by sound; the organ of perception; the thirds of that organ; one third of the same.

162. Transpositions:

In a word meaning together, change to a meaning loosened.

Give, change to mean; a native of Germany, to a horse's crib; a Spanish nobleman, to make in disorder; neither, to a large soup basin; a red precious stone, to unknown; without feeling, to money; a man of authority to running water.

Answers next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 108.

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| 1. T abith | a...Acts ix. 36-40. |
| 2. H eave | n...Acts vii. 49. |
| 3. U nlearn | d...Acts iv. 13. |
| 4. N eighbou | r...Luke x. 36. |
| 5. D ian | a...Acts xix. 34. |
| 6. E lei, Eloi, lama | sabachthan i...Mark xv. 34. |
| 7. R empha | m...Acts vii. 43. |

THUNDER AND RAIN. Sam. xii. 17, 18.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

155. P L A I N
L O I N
A I D
I N

156. H
B
L
S
W
A N D

157. C
O
W
C A M E O
C O M P A N Y
W E A V E
O N E
Y

158. BEHEADED WORDS.
Glisten, listen; Naught, ought; Coffin, offer; Woven, oven; Prefer, refer; Screw, crew; Trend, rend.

Select Serial.

A Thorny Path.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY OF SADNESS.

At five o'clock in the morning there were not many people about, yet a little knot of working men and women quickly gathered about the cab. The driver had been driving fast, counting upon the road being clear at such an hour; and he had found it impossible to pull up his horse in time. A man, dressed in the uniform of a railway guard, sprang in an instant from the cab, and was the first to pull Hagar and her baby from under the frightened and plunging horse.

"It's a woman!" he cried, "with a child in her arms."

A policeman marched up briskly to the spot, and turned the bright side of his lamp upon Hagar's face. The guard had lifted her out of the road on to the curbstone, and kneeling down was keeping her from sinking to the ground. The light fell full upon her worn and haggard features, and the thin drenched clothing clinging to her form. There was no sign of life about her, though her arms still clasped the baby tightly to her bosom. But the baby's pitiful wail had ceased forever.

"Both dead!" said the policeman.

"God forbid!" exclaimed the railway-guard, whose face wore an expression of anxiety. "Look here; take her sharp to the hospital, and lose no time about it. My name is Abbott; everybody knows me at Paddington. I am just in with the night train, and my poor mother is on her death-bed. She was dying last night, when I started from Birkenhead; and I was hurrying home to see her once again, if she is alive yet. But here, lift the poor creature into the cab; I will go home afoot. I will come and see after her by-and-by."

He placed Hagar in charge of a woman who had been passing by on her way to work, and staying for a moment to watch the cab start off in the direction of the hospital, he started hurriedly onward to the home where his mother had

been dying all the night, or was now lying dead. It had seemed a very hard and sorrowful thing to think of during the long hours of the journey, as the train he had charge of was rushing through the darkness, although to him it had seemed moving almost at a snail's pace. That had been his mode of life for several years, running down to Birkenhead one day, and coming back the next; spending only every other night and every other Sunday at home. It was a life that suited him; for he was active, and loved variety. He had found no fault with it until now, when his old mother, dearer to him than any other human being, was lying at death's door, and might have crossed the threshold with no last loving smile on her face, and no last good-by from her dear lips.

Abbott turned into a quiet and pleasant street, dark this November morning, but in summer-days, when he came home at the same early hour, peaceful and shady, with trees planted before many of the houses, and flowers blooming on the window-sills. He and his mother had chosen to live here, in the area floor of a large house, rather than in a higher story of a dwelling in closer and busier streets. The upper portion of the house was occupied by a distant relative of theirs, who was a dressmaker.

A few steps led down to their own separate door into the area, where some red leaves still fluttered on the Virginia creeper, which had made their front window green and shady in the late summer-time. The front room was a large and pleasant kitchen; while the back room, where his mother slept, looked out on a little plot of grass, kept green and cool by her constant care of it. His own bed-chamber was up in the attic, to which he had to pass through his cousin's part of the house, where it was as quiet as it could be in London, for his sleep through the morning hours. He had a latch-key to the area-door; though it had been seldom that he had not found his mother up, and his breakfast ready for him, as long as she had been able to get about at all. But this morning the place was dark as he turned his key carefully, and stepped noiselessly into the passage, with the cautious step of one who is afraid of disturbing some light sleeper. As he closed the door, his cousin appeared on the threshold of his mother's room, looking out with eyes red with weeping.

"She's just going," she whispered; "you'd have been too late in another few minutes. She's been almost fretting for you to come."

Abbott knelt down and kissed his mother's white face.

"Mother," he said, "are you going to leave me alone?"

"Ay, alone, my lad," she murmured, "yet not alone, because God is with thee! Thou knows that?"

"Surely," he answered, "surely! Hasn't He been with you and with me all our lives? But it will be lonesome, mother—never to see your dear face, and never hear your dear voice! We've been so happy together, mother."

"Ay, he's been a good son, Lord," said the dying woman fondly, "never a rough word from him, and never a cross look. Lord, thou'll bless him, and abide with him, and bring him safe to me when his time comes. I leave him with thee, Lord."

"I shall come, mother! I shall come," said Abbott. "That's a good hope," he sobbed.

"A good hope," she repeated smiling. Her wrinkled but placid face was as tranquil as it had ever been when she was falling asleep for the night; and her dim sunken eyes gazed into his face with all the old fondness and cheerfulness he had been used to see there. Her hand rested in his, and tried to clasp it tightly for a minute or two; but very soon the feeble pressure ceased, and the withered fingers grew cold. Then the eyelids dropped over the failing eyes, and her voice fell very softly on his ear.

"I'm going—but he will come—to me," she faltered.

It was all over; and a few minutes afterwards Abbott mounted the long staircase to his little attic under the roof. The day was not breaking yet, and the fog was growing thicker over the city. He sat down on the side of his bed, and rested his head upon his

hands, with a dreary sense of utter loneliness pressing down upon him. From the day that his father died, twenty-five years ago, when he was a boy of ten, he had never spent any long portion of his life aloof from his mother. He had lived and worked for her. She had been a calm-tempered, wise-hearted woman; and the simple, perfect love of mother and son had never been disturbed between them. And now she was gone, and he was alone—with no one to think of on his journeyings to and fro, and no home to come back to at the close of each. For a home with no human companionship would be no home to him.

"I shall go to her, but she will not return to me," he kept repeating slowly and mechanically to himself. He thought of Christ raising to life again the young man at Nain, who "was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow," and he thanked God for having spared him to his own widowed mother, whose life had been a happy and a peaceful one. But he could not as yet realize that she was actually gone; that the place down stairs was empty. He crept quietly down again, and stood in the dark passage, listening to the voices and the movements of the women in his mother's room. There was nothing he could do at present, not even go in and sit down beside the bed, and look at the grave and tranquil face, sleeping its last sleep. At last the thought of the poor woman, knocked down, perhaps killed on his way home, flashed across his mind.

"I'll go and see if there's anything to be done," he said to himself.

It was three hours since Hagar and her baby had been admitted into the accident ward of the hospital. But the baby had been carried to the dead room, and Abbott was told that it was very doubtful if the woman would recover. There was no clew to her name and dwelling-place; and he could give no information about her. But when they asked him what must be done with the dead body of the child, and he looked down at the puny wasted frame and the small white face, the tears that had been smarting under his eyelids, filled his eyes as if he had been gazing on his mother's dear features.

"I've a funeral from my house," he said, "and the coffin shall be made a little larger for the little creature. Perhaps the mother would fret over it being buried by the parish, if she comes to herself and asks after it. Send the baby to my house."

So, when Abbott's mother was laid in a coffin, her snow-white hair braided softly against her withered face, the little unknown child was placed beside her with its tiny head resting on her arm. The neighbors who came in to see, said it was like Abbott and his mother, ever ready to give help and shelter to the friendless and homeless. The dead woman was sharing even her coffin and her grave with one who had no claim upon her, except that of being a child of the same heavenly Father.

God is in Heaven.

God is in heaven! Can He hear
A little prayer like mine?
Yes, thoughtful child, thou need'st not
fear,
He listens unto thine.

God is in heaven! Can He see
When I am doing wrong?
Yes, that He can; He looks at thee
All day and all night long.

God is in heaven! Would He know
If I should tell a lie?
Yes, though thou saidst it very low,
He'd hear it in the sky.

God is in heaven! Does He care,
Or is He good to me?
Yes, all thou hast to eat or wear
'Tis God that gives it thee.

God is in heaven! Can I go
To thank Him for His care?
Not yet; but love Him here below,
And He will see it there.

God is in heaven! May I pray
To go there when I die?
Yes, seek His grace, and then one day
He'll call thee to the sky.

"Lemmy, you're a pig," said a farmer to his son, who was five years old. "Now, do you know what a pig is, Lemmy?" "Yes, sir; a pig is a hog's little boy."

The new year has already given us something for nothing. It is the figure one.