The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—MAY 20, 1883.

HEROD AND PETER.
Acts xii. 1-17.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 5-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him."—Psalm xxxiv. 7.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, Acts xii. 1-17.
T. Herod and his Fate, Acts xii. 18-25.
W. Drinking of Christ's Cup, Mark x. 35-45.
T. An Ancient Deliverance, Dan. vi. 10-24.
F. Christ's Living or Dying, Phil. i. 19-30.
S. Israel Rejected. Rom. xi. 1-22,
S. The Future of Israel, Rom. xi. 23-36

CLIMAX OF JEWISH OPPOSITION.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. James Killed, Vs. 1-5. II. Peter Delivered, Vs. 6-11. III. Peter Departs, Vs. 12-17.

QUESTIONS.—What was now the position of the Jewish rulers and people? Who was their king? Was he of the house of David? Of what race was he?

Vs. 1-5.—What did Herod do? What had Christ predicted of James? How was this fulfilled? What was done with Peter? Why?

Vs. 6-11.—How near was Peter to death? How guarded? Did he expect to escape? How could he sleep so quietly?

Vs. 12-17.—Where did Peter go? What was going on then? Of what was this a primitive example? What does it teach us about prayer-meetings?

Scripture Searchings.—What does the Bible teach about the work of angels?

NOTES.—Vs. 1-4.—*About that time.* While the church was prospering at Antioch, it was suffering persecution at Jerusalem. *Herod the king.* Herod Agrippa. He was grandson of Herod the Great, who slaughtered the infants in Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 16); nephew of Herod Antipas, who murdered The Baptist, and father of Herod Agrippa II., who was "almost persuaded" to be a Christian (Acts xxvi. 28). He was an Idumean by birth; was educated at Rome; won the favor of Caligula, who gave him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias; secured the title of king; and afterwards received from Claudius the whole territory which had been ruled by his grandfather. *To vex.* To afflict. *James.* The son of Zebedee, and one of the three who had been most intimate with Jesus. Him Herod seized suddenly, and beheaded him before the church had time to interpose by prayer. The first of the apostles to seal his testimony with his blood. The reason for Herod's action is given—*he saw it pleased the Jews.* It was a cunning stroke of state-craft. As this was an easy road to popular favor, he resolved to continue in it, and therefore *proceeded to seize Peter also.* Pleasing the Jews and the Emperor; and, according to Josephus, putting two millions of dollars a year into his pocket. What were the lives of a few hated Christians in comparison? But here the providence of God stepped in. Herod could shed blood when it suited him, but his piety was punctilious about points of law. The Passover, or *days of unleavened bread*, had come, and no criminal could be executed during that sacred week. Hence Herod put Peter *in prison*, till the Passover week was ended. He made him secure by delivering him to *four quaternions of soldiers*; *i. e.*, four companies of four each, or sixteen soldiers. These companies of four took turns in keeping him, relieving each other every three hours. Two soldiers slept with Peter chained between and to them, and two stood guard outside. Chains, bars, guards, locks, walls, all were called into requisition to keep one unarmed prisoner.

Vs. 5.—The delay was fatal to Herod's purpose. It gave the church an opportunity to spread the matter before the Lord. The *But* is very significant. Hitherto the battle had all gone one way, and Peter seemed doomed. This little word points to Peter's deliverance. *Prayer was made . . of the church unto God for him.* The Jerusalem Church were familiar with such teachings as are found in Matt. vii. 7. *Without ceasing.* Rather, *earnestly.* Burning prayer, that set their difficulties on fire. *For him.* The whole story intimates that their special prayer was for his release.

Vs. 6.—*The same night.* The night after the great festival, and before the day of trial and execution. *Peter was sleeping.* Not agonizing, like the church. He honored God more by sweetly resting in faith upon him. It was for the church to bestir themselves, as they did. *Bound with two chains.* One on each arm, to a soldier on each side. *The keepers before the door.* The other two soldiers. These graphic touches show how impossible it was for Peter to escape by natural means.

Vs. 7-9.—*The* (an) *angel of the Lord came upon* (stood by) *him.* See Heb. i. 14; Luke ii. 9. A *light shined in the prison* (cell). The angel brought a section of heaven with him. Compare Luke ii. 9. *Smote Peter on the side, and raised* (roused, or awoke) *him.* The smiting was like a good shaking to a heavy sleeper; for Peter, with a good conscience and calm faith, slept soundly upon the eve of what promised to be his martyrdom. *Arise quickly.* There was something for Peter to do in the matter of his deliverance. *His chains fell off.* Without disturbing the guard. *Gird thyself.* With the girdle which was loosened or removed for sleeping. *Bind on thy sandals.* Peter was to leave nothing behind but *the chains. Follow me.* A familiar command, which Peter, accustomed to obey, heeded, although he was so dazed that he did not know whether it was reality or a vision.

Vs. 10.—Passing the *first and second wards*, or guards, *they came unto the iron gate.* So massive that when unlocked it required several men to move it. *Passed through one street.* Probably to some point familiar to Peter, from which he could find his way. *The angel departed.* The Lord does not do for us what we can do for ourselves.

Vs. 11. When Peter realized his deliverance, his first thought was of gratitude; ascribing his release to the true source, *the Lord.*

Vs. 12.—*Many were gathered together praying, at the house of Mary*, the mother of John Mark. This Mark was undoubtedly the author of the Gospel bearing that name.

Vs. 13-16.—These verses have a peculiar air of naturalness. The very mention of Mark's name seems to give a touch of his vivid description to the scene. We see Peter knocking at the early morning hour, between three and six o'clock; the damsel, Rhoda, hearkening, and recognizing Peter's voice, and instead of opening the door, running back to tell the praying band that Peter was there; their incredulity; her confident assertion that it was he; their explanation that it was his guardian angel (not his spirit); the impatient Peter keeping up his knocking; the door at last opened, and their astonishment at beholding him.

Vs. 17.—*Beckoning with his hand.* A gesture to silence their loud congratulations. *James.* The Lord's brother (Gal. i. 19), who was practically pastor of the Jerusalem church. *Departed.* A wise precaution, for the officers would very naturally search for him there. Where he went is not known.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

LESSON THOUGHT:—*Deliverance from danger.*

TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT:—1. God is able to save from danger and death. 2. The death of a believer may be the greater triumph, and therefore may be permitted. 3. Prayer is availing with God. 4. Simple faith and trust is the Christian's privilege and duty.

Four men are named in our lesson. One was a very wicked man; the others were good men. Which was the wicked man? (Herod). It was the grandfather of this man, also named Herod, who tried to kill the child Jesus, and who filled Bethlehem with mourning by his wicked slaughter of the little children.

James was one of the *good* men named in our lesson. There is another, the *James* named in the last verse, who probably was a brother of Jesus. The third was—? (Peter). Our lesson is mostly about HEROD the king, and PETER the apostle. The lesson is full of pictures. Let us look at them.

The first is of a wicked king. The City is Jerusalem. Christians are there who are living the new life that Jesus taught. The king troubles them; he drives them from home; he takes away their property; he puts them into prison. Herod finds that some people, wicked as himself, are pleased, and he puts Peter into prison, intending to kill him, also. Perhaps he thinks that God cannot save any one from his power.

The second picture is of a prison, where Peter is confined. There are heavy doors, with bolts and bars; thick and strong walls; and small windows, that let in the light. Chains are upon Peter's wrists. Near him are soldiers, to whom Peter is chained, so that he cannot escape. The great iron door swings open of itself; and Peter is free again.

The third picture is of a prayer-meeting, where Christians had been a long time praying for Peter. They believed in God, and trusted him. They knew that God would answer in his own way, and that way would be the best, for they knew that God always answers true prayer. The night is nearly past, when a knocking is heard at the door. A young girl goes to see who it is. Peter calls from the outside. Perhaps he said: "It is I; Peter; open the door." The young girl runs back to those who were praying, saying that Peter was there. They cannot at first believe it. But Peter keeps on knocking. Then the door is opened, and they are very, *very* glad to see him again. Then he tells how God delivered him, and soon he goes away to another place, where Herod cannot do him harm. Prayer is answered and Peter is saved.

The golden text is very beautiful; repeat it together.

—Abridged from the *Baptist Teacher.*

Youths' Department.

Original and Selected.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 223.

1. What servant of the church did Paul commend,
   And by her his epistle to the Romans send?
2. Who did her idol gods and country leave,
   And to her husband's mother fondly cleave?
3. Who to an idol would not bow the knee,
   Regardless of the cruel king's decree?
4. Who by a father's hand on altar lain,
   A type of Him who for our sins was slain?
5. What child was early taught to serve the Lord,
   Whereby his mother gained a rich reward?
6. Who, to reprove his children did refrain,
   Left on the record of his life a stain?
   These initials form an oft-repeated word,
   Chiefly ascribed in Scripture to the Lord.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 56. Form a diamond of words reading the same horizontally as perpendicularly of

1. What is said to horses.
2. What all must do at last.
3. A large specimen.
4. The last of any thing.
5. Again, the last of it.

No. 57. Form a triangle of words of

1. Ten parts of the body.
2. An ancient prophetess.
3. Half a lady.
4. The beginning of a sigh.

No. 58. Re-arrange the letters in the following and find a recent astronomical phenomenon: THAT EVENT IS FOR SUN.

No. 59. Discover this charade. The first half of which is an important part of the human frame; a constituent of all bodies, regular or irregular; it is sometimes *in*, sometimes *out*, sometimes *this*, and sometimes *that*, sometimes *one*, and sometimes the *other*.

My second is a common action,—sometimes induced by the hurry of business, sometimes by the mere love of pleasure: it offers economy the cheapest medicine, and taste the most picturesque scenery; it is what English ladies like best, and Turks like least; and it may well be said to be fashionable, for it is *the go* throughout the world.

My whole is indispensable in every city,—yet valuable as it is, it is trampled on by all classes; all who use it are raised above the common track,—yet high and low, rich and poor, great and small, unite to destroy it.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 222.

1. Thou: Psa. xxxii. 7; lxxxiii. 24.
2. Sand: Gen. xxii. 17; Matt. vii. 26.
3. Thousand: 2 Peter iii. 8, 9.

THOUSAND.

No. 223. Sherezer. Regemmeleck. Zechariah vii. 2.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 52.
M
M A Y
A P R I L
O C T
H

No. 53. Cares, Caress.

No. 54. George Washington.

No. 55. *Word Game.*

H	A	S
N	O	T
D	I	G

Ah, ha! oh, oh! as ton do! not, so; no, hog, has, to, go, on, at, it, an, dig, in, sod.

A copy of Petrarch's Songs, printed at Venice in 1470 and consequently very scarce, brought at a late London sale the neat sum of $9,750.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Associations and Finances.

Mr. Editor,—

With your permission I would like to say a few words in reference to the expenditure of money in connection with the Associations.

Your correspondent, "T. M. K," in his letter this week, advises not to publish Minutes of the Associations. That is one point on which I have been intending to enlarge a little. The publication of Minutes has been costing the denomination near $330 a year for many years. Now it seems to me that even the most *conservative* brethren may pause long enough to ask whether or not this is a wise expenditure.

I hold that the publication of the Minutes should be discontinued for the following reasons: 1st. We ought to have the statistics of the churches composing the Convention published in one volume each year, and not in eight volumes as is now the case.

2nd. The Year Book for 1882 gives all the information concerning denominational matters that any member of the Convention needs to know.

3rd. All that is of any value to the churches in the Minutes of Associations is repeated in the Year Book. Statistics of the churches, the list of ordained ministers, licentiates, etc., and hence we have to pay for doing work twice which only needs to be done once.

4th. So far as I can learn the churches do not appropriate any money for the publication of Association Minutes. If they do, the Minutes should reveal the fact, which they do not. Now, if I am right in affirming that the churches do not appropriate funds to this object, will some one inform me where the money comes from?

I think the suggestions of "T. M. K.," in your issue of this week, are valuable, and I hope they will receive the consideration which they merit.

There is another aspect of this financial question which I intend to notice on another occasion, viz., its bearing on the development of the Convention Scheme.

Yours, &c.,
E. J. GRANT.

Dartmouth, May 2nd, 1883.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Baptismal Service and a Reminiscence.

Dear Bro. Selden,—

Last Sabbath evening, just before sundown, it was my privilege to witness the ordinance of baptism administered by the Rev. D. G. McDonald, at Southampton, in the beautiful Maccan River. The scene brought to my recollection so clearly the following lines, which appeared in the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER near forty years ago—June 29th, 1845—that I have been induced to send them to you, hoping that you may think them worthy of a place in the columns of the MESSENGER again.

Yours truly,
H. M.

Athol, April 25th, 1883.

BY MRS. M. L. GARDINER.

'Twas Sabbath eve, the sun was low,
Serenely sinking in the west;
A crimson cloud hung o'er his brow,
Which fancy peopled with the blest.
Admiring saints in beauty stood,
With golden harp in either hand;
And bending o'er the crystal flood,
Welcomed with smiles a pilgrim band,

Who had renounced the things of earth,
And freely yielded all for heaven;
Forsook the scenes of joy and mirth,
For the sweet hope of sins forgiven.
Tho' winds were high and proud waves curl'd
Majestic on the pebbly shore,
The gospel banner high unfurl'd,
With fearless steps they onward bore.

Like incense rose the voice of prayer,
And mingled with the gusty breeze;
The aged and the young were there,
With thoughtful look and bended knees.
Among them was a fair young girl,
With auburn hair and eyes of blue;
Who heeded not the wild waves curl
As brighter objects met her view.

And there, amid the waters stood
The man of God, with solemn brow;
Alone, he trod the swelling flood,
With courage firm and footsteps slow.
Calmly he gazed on all around,—
As if he felt his Saviour near;
And then, immersed, with awe profound,
Each convert in the waters clear.

LOVE, not the wave that o'er them roll'd,
Redeemed them from the second death;
LOVE bro't the wanderers to the fold,
And crowned them with an Eden wreath!
Their songs of praise ascended high,
And roll'd in sweetness o'er the flood;
While earth and ocean, air and sky,
Responded loud that "God is good!"

Behind the clouds that lightly flew
The sun oft veiled his rosy face;
Then forth—as if the scene to view,
He burst in tenfold loveliness!
O'er hill-tops, turrets, steeples high,
He threw a flood of liquid light;
As if an all-pervading eye
Approved the scene, and bless'd the sight.

Then sinking slowly in the main,
His parting blessing seemed to fall
Upon the humble, pious train,
Who followed at their Master's call.
The setting sun—the gathering crowd—
The prayer of faith—the song of praise;
The wind—the wave—the crimson cloud—
Conspired one general pulse to raise.
Oh, never can my soul forget
The beauty of that Sabbath scene;
The hour, the place, I see it yet—
A leaf, in memory's chaplet green.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.—A son of St. Crispin having been summoned to appear before a School Board in the Midlands to explain the cause of the irregular attendance of his daughter, sent the following letter:—"To the ——— School Board, assembled in their barbarous imitation of a Gothic Temple. Gentlemen,—Do you as a body claim to be political economists? I trow not, or you would not require me to lose time, which to me is money indeed, to appear before you. Do you as a body set up any pretensions to philosophy? I am doubtful, or you would not require girls to be regularly at school, for most assuredly there must be a time for them to acquire a knowledge of domestic affairs, or how are the ranks of domestics to be filled? Education at school is but a means to an end—that end being life—for all, but for girls there must be education, or its equivalent education, at home. I need not tell you that the London School Board have become really alive to this. Why don't you become a vigilance committee and visit your schools, to see that there are plenty of hat pegs, wash-hand basins, towels, &c., and so teach ORDER, which is heaven's first law; and cleanliness, which is godliness? This in my opinion would be more commendable than spending postage stamps in badgering the industrious poor, who should be allowed some discretion over the juvenility days of their children. I never heard of School Boards interfering with the four months' holiday per year of the sons of beefeaters. Why don't they send them summonses and say, BRING THIS WITH YOU? Bring this with you. Great heavens! You ought to deliver yourselves up to Her Majesty's Privy Council and take lessons in common politeness. I feel awfully insulted; however, I promise to send the girl to school to day.—Gentlemen, yours obediently, ——."

The Value of Missionaries.

The missionaries themselves display an example, the brightness of which is reflected on the nation to which they belong. They are to be heard preaching in every city, and almost in every large town, throughout the empire. They are considerately attentive to every inquirer and listener. They are held to be among the best teachers and schoolmasters in the country, even at a time when the educational staff of the government affords a model of organization. They receive heathen children in the mission schools, not withholding Christian instruction; and yet they retain the unabated confidence of the heathen parents. They are trusted as benevolent advisers by their native neighbors. They are known as friends in need and trouble, and as being ready to advocate temperately the redress of wrongs or the removal of oppression. In seasons of pestilence and of famine, they have been vigilant in forecasting evil consequences, and instant in dispensing aid. They have been among the foremost in the voluntary bands of relief. They have often afforded to the government and to its officers information which could not have been so well obtained otherwise. They have done much to elucidate before their countrymen and before the world the customs, the institutions, and the feelings of the natives. They have contributed greatly to the culture of the vernacular languages. Many of them, as scholars, historians, sociologists, or lexicographers, have held a high place in Oriental literature, and have written books of lasting fame and utility. They have, with the co-operation of their wives and daughters, accomplished much towards establishing and promoting female education, and have exemplified before the natives the sphere of usefulness that may be occupied by educated women. They have enabled the natives to note the beauty of British homes which shed abroad the light of charitable ministrations, and diffuse the genial warmth of practical philanthropy.—*Sir Richard Temple.*

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[From the Boston Globe.]

Messrs. Editors:—
The above is a good likeness of Mrs. Lydia E. Pinkham, of Lynn, Mass., who above all other human beings may be truthfully called the "Dear Friend of Woman," as some of her correspondents love to call her. She is zealously devoted to her work, which is the outcome of a life-study, and is obliged to keep six lady assistants, to help her answer the large correspondence which daily pours in upon her, each bearing its special burden of suffering, or joy at release from it. Her Vegetable Compound is a medicine for good and not evil purposes. I have personally investigated it and am satisfied of the truth of this.
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