

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1884.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—FEBRUARY 24, 1884.

THESSALONIANS AND BEREANS.

Acts xvii. 1-14.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 2-4.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so."—Acts xvii. 11.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson.—Acts xvii. 1-14. T. Paul's two Sabbaths in Antioch of Pisidia.—Acts xiii. 15-48. W. Paul's Treatment at Lystra.—Acts xiv. 11-20. T. Jesus Accused of Stirring up Tumult.—Luke xxiii. 1-10. F. Reading of the Law at Shechem.—Josh. viii. 30-35. S. The Bible-school at Jerusalem.—Neh. viii. 1-8. S. The Precious Word of God.—Psalm cxix. 97-105.

ANALYSIS.—I. At Thessalonica, Vs. 1, 5. II. The Great Uproar, Vs. 6, 9. III. The Noble Bereans, Vs. 10-12. IV. Fresh Tumults, Vs. 13, 14.

QUESTIONS.—What did Paul and Silas do in prison? They prayed and sang praises unto God. How did God answer them? By an earthquake, which shook the prison, opened its doors, and loosed the prisoners. Who was, probably, left at Philippi? How does this appear? Where did Luke rejoice the party?

Vs. 1-5.—Through what towns did the missionaries pass? Why did they not stop there? Where is Thessalonica? Why was it an important point for the gospel?

Vs. 6-9.—Whom did the mob seek in Jason's house? Did they find them? Whom did they think Jesus to be? Were Paul and his company guilty of rebellion, or treason? Does the gospel teach us to resist authority? See Rom. xiii. 1.

Vs. 10-12.—To what place did the brethren send Paul and Silas? What is said of the Bereans? How did they show their nobility? What was the result of their Bible searching?

Vs. 13, 14.—Who heard about this revival at Berea? Were they glad? Why not? How did they show their hatred to the word?

Possibly Luke may have been left at Philippi, in charge of the infant church, while the other missionaries went on their way towards Athens. For here the story uses the third person "they," instead of the "we" of xvi. 16, indicating the absence of the narrator. The "we" is resumed in xx. 5, 6. Paul's mission was specially to plant churches, and though it would seem that he might have remained in Philippi with safety to himself and profit to the church, he still pushes on his way to the regions beyond.

NOTES.—Vs. 1.—Amphipolis; Apollonia. Paul probably lodged in these towns, without stopping to preach; perhaps because of the lack of synagogues, for as yet he sought to give the gospel "to the Jew first." Thessalonica. At the time of Paul's visit this was the most important city of Macedonia, and its metropolis; and hence, a grand centre for gospel work. It had been made a free city by the Roman government, having the right of self-government, which it retained on good behavior. A (the) synagogue. Perhaps the only one for many miles around serving for neighboring towns, as well, where the Jews were not sufficiently numerous to have one.

Vs. 2, 3.—As his manner was. See xiv. 1; xvi. 13; xix. 8. Three Sabbath days. This could not have comprised his whole ministry in this city, but it was probably its duration in the synagogue. Out of the Scriptures. Notice that the Scriptures were the invariable appeal of both Christ and his apostles. Opening. Unfolding, expounding. Arguing. Arguing by citing and comparing Scriptures: Christ... must have suffered. The Jews had overlooked this fact as to their Messiah, and thought of him only as coming in glory as a conqueror. Paul's argument was (1) that the Messiah, according to the Old Testament Scriptures, must suffer, die, and rise again from the dead. (2) That this Jesus whom he preached to them, had filled out these prophecies, and (3) Therefore he is the Christ or Messiah. As to Paul's manner of preaching in this city, see I Thess. i. 5; ii. 2-8.

Vs. 4.—Some of them—i. e., the Jews. Consorted. Attached themselves to Paul and Silas, choosing the Christian life, even with its persecutions (Heb. xi. 25). But the Jews were few compared with the devout or proselyte Greeks. These had come into Judaism because seeking for the true God, and dissatisfied with heathenism, and were the more eager to know the truth. Chief women. As in xiii. 50, wives of

prominent men. These were also of the synagogue worshippers, and hence all of these first converts were won to Christianity from the Jewish faith, and not from heathenism.

Vs. 5.—The Jews which believed not. The bigotry of the Jews seems to have excluded Paul from the synagogue here, as afterwards at Corinth (xviii. 7); and here, as at Antioch, in Pisidia, and at Lystra (xiii. 45, 50; xiv. 19), the Jews stirred up persecution. Lewd fellows. Street loafers. Baser sort. Like the roughts of our cities. Assaulted the house of Jason. Jason was a kinsman of Paul (Rom. xvi. 21), and he and Silas were stopping with him. His fault was that he had harbored these preachers. The people. The popular assembly, which in a free city like Thessalonica would judge such cases.

Vs. 6, 7.—Failing to find Paul and Jason, they vented their wrath upon Jason and certain brethren; i. e., converts, drawing them before the rulers, Greek politicians, a special official title for that city. An inscription has been found upon an arch on the site of that city, with this official name upon it, showing Luke's accuracy in such matters. Turned the world upside down. Sin had turned the world wrong side up; the gospel would undo sin's work, and turn it right side up. The decrees of Caesar. Laws against rebellion and treason. In an empire that rested on force, treason was so vague and broad a term, that it might be made to include almost any offence. Another king. Paul may have spoken of the kingdom of Jesus, and we know that he did speak of his return (I Thess. i. 10; ii. 19), and this was enough to give envy and prejudice their opportunity. The hint of another king, even a spiritual one, was construed as treason to Caesar.

Vs. 8, 9.—Troubled. Such a report might take away the privileges of a free city. Security. Probably a pledge to send the disturbers (Paul and Silas) away, which the brethren did at once, and by night, lest violence should be done them.

Vs. 10-12.—More noble. Or, better born. They were of a better class; i. e., free from prejudice, as is evidenced by their conduct. They received the word with all readiness of mind. They had a sincere desire to be taught aright. Yet they had not the superstitious credulity of the Lycaonians (xiv. 11), for they searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. And this is what the gospel asks of all men. Therefore many believed. These believers were Jews who studied their own Scriptures; but to their ranks were added Greek proselytes, honorable women (see xiii. 50), and men, not a few. These also were Bible students.

Vs. 13, 14.—Came thither also. The intense hostility of the unbelieving Jews to the gospel was seen in xiv. 19. How like the spirit that crucified our Lord. Sent Paul away. Because against him the wrath of the Jews was especially excited. As it were to the sea. Better as in New Version, as far as the sea. They went with him to the sea coast, from whence he most probably went by vessel to Athens.

SUGGESTED LESSONS. Paul's preaching was expounding the Scriptures; and he never became so learned as to get beyond that.

Satan, as well as Christ, has missionaries. Alas, how often his excel in zeal and activity the commissioned servants of the Lord! The Scriptures ask not blind credulity, but intelligent faith. Honorable men and women become yet more honorable as they take their place at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him.

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

Follow Paul and Silas, with their backs still sore, on their journey. Make two squares for the two cities, and tell how the people of each place acted. If you only listen while I am talking, and then go away and care no more for it, you are like the people of Thessalonica. But if you think of what you hear, and ask God to help you to keep it, then you are like the Bereans. Perhaps you think you are too little to search the Scriptures. You are not too little to begin. Show that even if they cannot read, they can get mamma to teach them the Golden Text, at least. That will make over fifty beautiful Bible verses every year.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. How poor and helpless, how mere a pilgrim and a stranger in the world over which he has no rule, must he be who has not God at one with him! Not otherwise can his life be free save as moving in loveliest harmony with the will and life of the only freedom—that which wills and we are!—George McDonald.

Youth's Department.

Original and Selected. Bible Enigma.

No. 264.

Here are a number of persons and places described. Find them by the words in Italics, and place them in order:

- 1. He was sent by an angel into the South, and met with success, for God opened his mouth. 2. When a friend, dearly loved, came knocking quite late, this damsel was tending the praying-room gate. 3. His conduct was pleasing to God here on earth. 4. His daughter adopted a son of low birth. 5. He was called on account of a gifted tongue. 6. In the days of the harvest her sons were hung. 7. A priest who received from a king a decree. 8. This word has a meaning like,—Thus it shall be. 9. Was confined to his bed for a term of years. 10. Her corpse was surrounded by widows in tears. 11. He prayed, and the Lord added years to his life. 12. This beautiful maiden became a loved wife. 13. Was sent as a helpmeet and blessing to a man. 14. The king of this country went up against Dan. 15. This color is somewhere applied to the hair. A message my primals will boldly declare.

—Selected.

CURIOS QUESTIONS. No. 189.

Behold crystalized water, and you leave the present time. Curtail and you have a negation. Restore head and tail and transpose the letters, making a word signifying holds in possession. Behold a narrative, and leave a beverage. Restore, and transpose to after time, transpose again to a waterfall.

TRANSPOSITIONS. No. 190.

First is the Scripture name of one whose son Through sorely tested faith, Heaven's favor won. Transpose, an organ in the living frame Appears, which to your utmost care lays claim. Third is a planet that around the sun Ceaseless in its appointed course doth run. Now of my fourth beware! He loves you not, But glad would be to mar your favored lot.

No. 191.

Supply the appropriate vowels to the following and you have three beautiful triplets: H l d h m n p e t r s g n ? N t l w s ; a m t m s H W h k n t h b e t , n k d n s s e l d h m n w r y w e , w h r h v s h d s b .

f t h s n s h n w r m n d s f t n d b r g h t , f t h s n s h n n t d r k t n g h t , f t w i d f a t w i t h s r r n d f i g h t .

n l f r t h s — k n H h l d s m h n d ; S w i t h i n r g n r d s r t l n d , t r a t , l t g h m n t n d r s t n d .

No. 192.

Whole, this a worker is in lead; 'Tis rubbish, if you it behead; Cut off my head once more, I pray; Why, it's a color, then you'll say.

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

ANSWER TO BIBLE ENIGMA. No. 263.

Prepare to meet thy God O Israel—Amos iv. 12. Solutions, Pethor, Diotrepes, Lot, Ishi, Satyr, Gleda, Gomer, Amos.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS. No. 186.

Pray without ceasing. No. 187. 1. Rhone; 2. Nile; 3. Tiber; 4. Seine; 5. Tweed; 6. Connecticut; 7. Ohio; 8. Jordan.

No. 188. 1. Ten, able; 2. Ten, ant; 3. Ten, or.

Lines for an Album.

We may write our names in albums, We may trace them in the sand, We may chisel them in marble With a firm and skilful hand; But the pages soon are sullied, Soon each name will fade away; Every monument shall crumble, Like all earthly hopes, decay. But, dear friends, there is an album, Full of leaves of snowy white, Where no page is ever tarnished, But forever pure and bright. In the "Book of Life," "God's Album," May your name be penned with care, And may all who here have written, Find their names forever there.

Rev. H. S. Pentecost, the American evangelist, holds that the neglected classes are the rich. He finds missions and missionaries among the poor by hundreds, an emulous rivalry even, but the churchless wealthy are shut in by their own exclusiveness.

THE BRITISH AMERICAN BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY,

117 Granville Street, Halifax, N. S.

(Instituted in 1807.)

REVIEW OF SIXTEEN YEARS' WORK.

PRINCIPLES.

The Religious Tract Society of London, from whom we receive a large portion of our stock of Books, Sunday School Libraries, and Tracts, thus set forth their

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES.

To prevent the possibility of any misunderstanding respecting the nature of the Society's works, the Committee feel it necessary to state that they clearly and fully set forth the important truth, that "we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; that being justified freely, we are made the sons of God by adoption; made like the image of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, we walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, we attain to everlasting felicity." In publishing the truths of the Gospel, the Committee adhere to the Holy Scriptures as the only, but sufficient, standard of faith. Their publications flow from this sacred fountain; and the Committee hope, so far as it may be said of human productions, that they contain pure truth, uncontaminated with error and undisturbed with human systems. The constitution of the Society precludes it from entering into the respective peculiarities of the varied denominations of Protestant Christians that hold the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the one living and true God; but it every where joyfully makes known the great essential truths in which the followers of the Lamb are fully agreed, who are "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

The principles of the British American Book and Tract Society are in perfect accord with the foregoing statement.

In addition to these publications of the Religious Tract Society we import excellent Evangelical books, which have been received with marked approval by the Christian public.

It is our aim that nothing shall be put in circulation by us calculated to injure the cause of God, or to offend his dear children. It is our desire to promote unity in the bonds of the Gospel. "Let us not think it too much to take them, for by them whom God would seek to take for sons." These hath scarce been any age which hath seen all Churches following altogether one thing in all points, so as there hath not always been some difference, either in doctrines or ceremonies, or in manners; and yet were not Christian Churches throughout the world therefore cut asunder. "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

RESOURCES.

Since the formation of the Society, there has been received in Voluntary Contributions the sum of \$55,652. Of this amount \$11,285, was received for capital, and is now invested in a stock of books to carry on the work for which the Society was constituted, both by sale from the Depository, and also by Colportage. The remaining \$44,367, together with the profits arising from the sale of the books, has been applied to Colportage. Thus supported, our Colporters have performed labor equal to that of one man for one hundred and sixty two years.

The total sum paid for services and Expenses in Colportage has been \$72,759. This does not include any charge for superintendence, or for proportion of store expenses; but the actual salaries and expenses of the Colporters alone.

CIRCULATION.

Mere figures do not convey an adequate idea of the magnitude of this Society. If books of the average size issued from the depository were laid in a continuous line, a mile in length, would represent a value of about \$3,500, at the prices at which they are sold. In the sixteen years during which the Society has been at work, the total sales have been \$405,959, enough to represent one hundred and ten miles of books thus arranged. Numerous testimonials of their excellence have been received. Millions of periodicals have been circulated. About 11,000,000 pages of Tracts have been distributed. More than 250,000 copies of the Word of God have been issued. Hundreds of thousands of such books as "Come to Jesus," "Sinner's Friend," "God's Way of Peace," "Pilgrim's Progress," &c. &c., have been installed as Household Pastors in the homes of the people. The sales from the Depository have been—of Periodicals, \$43,570, of Bibles and Religious books, \$144,583, by Colportage, \$161,147, total sales, \$405,959. Gratuitous circulation by Colporters and from the Depository, upwards of \$18,300.

STATISTICS OF COLPORTAGE.

Colportage is the great work of the Society. During the past sixteen years there have been 127 Colporters employed, the aggregate time of their services being about 162 years. They travelled about 263,431 miles, and made 419,406 family visits, including 20,261 visits to Roman Catholic families. They found 1794 families destitute of the Scriptures and supplied them. They had personal religious conversation, reading of the Scriptures or prayer at 167,000 of the family visits made by them, and held or took part in 9193 prayer and other religious meetings. During these sixteen years many destitute neighborhoods have been explored, hundreds of families without a page of God's word have been supplied, while thousands of other families having only a single copy of the Scriptures, and a few pages of religious truth, have been more adequately provided for. Sabbath-schools have been organized. Home missionaries, Young Men's Christian Associations, and other laborers in the cause of our common Lord, have been furnished with weapons of warfare. Ministers of the Gospel have been assisted in their studies and their pastoral labors by the publications that have been brought within their reach by the Depository. The temperance cause has been promoted by the wide circulation of tracts and books on that subject. Home and Foreign Missions have been assisted directly and indirectly. Thousands of seamen far from home and from religious-privileges have had Gospel truth borne to them. Inquirers have been guided to the Saviour, revivals have been promoted, sinners have been saved, Christians have been comforted and quickened.

OUTLOOK FOR 1884.

Our staff of Colporters for 1884 will number thirty, to be located as follows:—Eleven in Nova Scotia; twelve in New Brunswick; three in Cape Breton; two in Prince Edward Island, and two in Newfoundland.

At a cost of \$2500 each—the lowest estimate of donations required to support a Colporteur for one year—we will require more than \$6000 in aid of Colportage. This amount, if work equal to that of one man for about twenty-five years, will be accomplished. Christian friends contributed to Colportage during 1883 the sum of \$4239. We wish to increase the number and the amount of donations this year. This leaflet may be read by many persons that have never been asked for aid in this most effective Mission Enterprise. Please send your offering, small or large, to the Depository, or give it to the Colporteur in your section.

Our Society aims at reaching all without distinction of creed, not for the purpose of strengthening any one Church, but in order that the light and joy of salvation, through Christ, may fill every heart.

HOSPITALITY TO COLPORTEURS.

We ask Christian friends everywhere in our Provinces, to show kindness and hospitality to the Society's Colporters, whose toilsome work involves much self denial. The Society pays the expenses of the Colporters, issued any persons that entertain him, with-owing to the large number of towns and villages to be visited by our collectors, country sections cannot be overtaken; hence few donations are received from such places, although it is chiefly in the interest of sparsely settled districts that Colportage is conducted. The Colporters are not only an agent of a purely benevolent Society, but a servant of the Lord, engaged in a mission of mercy to the needy. His salary is very small, not at all sufficient to induce him, without a heart filled with love to God and souls, to leave his home and family. He has many discouragements and trials in his work.

Brethren, do all you can to cheer him, and let it not be said that you could not keep him over night or for a day or two if necessary, without charge. "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me," says Christ.

GOD'S PROMISES.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.—Prov. ix., 24. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.—1 Pet. iv., 9. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.—Heb. ix., 2. And John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.

For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in thy name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.—Mark ix., 38, 41. God loveth a cheerful giver.—Cor. ix., 6. Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble.—Psalm xli., 1. On behalf of the Committee. T. A. BROWN, President.

JANUARY, 1884.

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

Burma.

MISSION TO THE KARENS.

Rev. A. Bunker writes from Toungoo, Oct. 25th, 1883. The Bghai Preachers' Conference met with the church in Toungoo on the 11th inst., and enjoyed a three-days' session. A large number of ministers were present. Reports were had from the limits of the field, and showed progress. Wathaicho church is in the midst of a war, and is now a stockaded church, as the village in which it is has joined a number of other villages in the war. The first battle was fought near the village of Wathau. The attack was made about eight o'clock a.m., while the school was in session. The school teachers fled, and the school broken up; but the native pastor—Moung See Dee—remains at his post. Six were killed in the first attack,—three on either side. I hope to be able to go up soon, and see if something cannot be done to secure peace to that beautiful valley. I have already secured the good offices of government in the effort.

Nearly one hundred Baptisms were reported at this conference from the whole field. There is a great increase in the school work, and the good effect of government aid is apparent in the renewed efforts of school teachers to have good schools, and of pupils to prepare themselves for examination. At this conference it was arranged by the native pastors, to visit every village within the limits of the Association and within English territory, before the next conference in February. The work has already begun, and letters received speak most encouragingly of those parts of the field which fell through bad teaching a few years ago, and afterwards joined the Roman Catholics. Says the writer, "We have visited six villages formerly worshippers of God, but now Roman Catholics. They all without exception received us cordially; some of the people wept when we sang the old tunes with which they used to be familiar in the early days of the mission. Many urged us to come again, and said, if we would visit them a few times, perhaps they could get strength enough to break away from the Roman Catholic teachers; for, say they, 'We get no good from them. We have no schools, and we have no one to lead us to any thing better.'"

Henthada, Burma.

The government school in this city has been largely under the supervision of Christian teachers, and may be supposed to be as little under the spell of "the state religion" as any. What was our surprise, however, to have the head of the girls' department ordered to see that Buddhist prayers are offered by her department two or three times a week! The Buddhist municipality has recently, with much effort, succeeded in finding, for a third teacher in that department, a Buddhist girl who knows the Burmese speller, and who conducts this state worship. We could hardly believe our eyes last week as we beheld the sad sight of a girls' school, supported by the British Government, bowing down in adoration of *Nga-mya-Kua*, the great "five-faced" pagoda of Henthada. We are glad to say, however, that there are a few daughters of heathen parents in the school who, together with the two head teachers, "refuse to bow the knee to Baal."—Rev. W. F. THOMAS, Nov. 20, 1883.

Revival in Egypt.

The Lord seems to be overruling this scourge for good; for when the cholera had reached its culmination, the people became frightened, and began to think seriously of it. In Asyoot the wealthy men met at nights to gamble and drink cognac to drown their trouble; but after much excess in this, their fears were the more terrifying, and they concluded to study the Bible. So they met and attempted to study the Scriptures. But they found some portions which they could not understand, and they sent for the pastor of this congregation to come and explain to them. He gladly went, and met with them every night, till the meeting became a prayer-meeting. The numbers increased till as many as two hundred and fifty men were present; and now there are six different places in Asyoot where these meetings are held and largely attended. They not only meet one night in the week, but every night. The awakening is something wonderful, and the like was never known in Egypt; and, more than that, these meetings are held in almost every town and village where there is a Protestant school or church. In Nehaly as many as five hundred men have been present at a meeting. Dr. Hogg reports that the first night at Minyeh he addressed an audience of one hundred and ten, and he was earnestly entreated to go to other villages to address them. Is not this a great revival? Yes, the work is going on encouragingly.—Miss ELLA KYLE, in the United Presbyterian.

English Wesleyan.

There has been a revival in Ceylon, in which more than one hundred have been converted.—From Lalysmith, Natal, one hundred and ninety-one additions to the churches are reported.—It is proposed to open a new mission in Spanish Honduras, where the prospects are very favorable. The government has expelled the Jesuits.—By the uprising in Hayti, the work of the mission has been broken up for the present. Some of the church-members have been killed, and nearly all have been ruined.

South America.

Paul Besson, a Baptist evangelist in the Argentine Republic, writes: "One of the greatest difficulties of the work of evangelization here is the dispersion of the brethren in the numerous colonies; but in spite of all the difficulties, and of opposition, indifference, and indolence, which is the great vice of the country, six have been added to the little church of Esperanza, which now numbers eighteen. Among the additions is a French physician recently from Geneva, and formerly a member of an independent church. By his vocation, his relations, and his knowledge of the Spanish language, he can be useful to the work of the Lord. In the church he contributes to the edification of the brethren, especially in my absence." He also says that it is expected the government will grant the right of civil marriage, in spite of the opposition of the priests.