

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, December 29th, 1867.

Acts. xviii. 23-31: Paul preaches at Rome.
Ezra ix. 17-32 x. 1-3. x. The king's great-
ness. Luke ix. 1-10-14.

Sunday, January 5th, 1868.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

According to Robinson's Harmony of the
Gospels.
Part 1st. Events connected with the birth and child-
hood of our Lord.

Luke 1. 1-25. Preface to Luke's Gospel. An
angel appears to Zachariah—Jerusalem.
Bible—Mat. 1. 1-5 and 6.

In a village near Warsaw, in Poland, there lived
a pious peasant of German parentage.
Without any fault on his part he had come short
in the payment of his rent, and the landlord had
threatened to turn him out of house and home,
even although it was in the middle of winter. The
peasant went several times to the cruel-hearted
landlord, to entreat him for forbearance, but in
vain; on the next day he, with his wife and chil-
dren, were to leave their home.

During the evening he was conducting family
worship, and whilst reading a portion of Holy
Scripture there was a knock at the window. It pro-
ceeded from an old friend, a raven, which Dorby's
father had taken from the nest and trained. Dorby
opened the window; the raven popped in, having in
its beak a ring set with costly stones. At first Dor-
by thought of disposing of the ring, but on reflection
he took it to the minister. The latter at once
recognized the ring as one belonging to the King
Stanislaus, to whom he went immediately and told
the story.

The king rent for Dorby and rewarded him, so
that at once he was relieved from rent, and the
next year he made him a present of a new house
and garden. Above the house door a tablet was
erected, with the Bible text inscribed thereon:
"Thou shalt not be troubled, and I delivered thee."
Ps. 91: 7. and has diamonds worth ten thousand
dollars.

The Raven and the Ring.

BY REV. J. C. LONG.

In a little Polish hamlet,
Near Warsaw's steeples tall,
In a cottage cozy built,
But neat as it was small,
Once there dwelt an honest peasant
With wife and children five,
Whom with daily toil and labor
He scarce could keep alive.

'Twas the middle of the winter,
His quarter's rent was due;
And the landlord, he was pressing—
What could poor Dorby do?
What the summons to his courage,
And with an honest face
Right to the landlord went he
And told him all his case.

"Little time I," said the landlord,
"For creatures such as you,
If you cannot pay my rent-bill
The very day, in due,
Out from my house, you caustiff,
To-morrow you shall go."
Said Dorby, "My wife and children
Will perish in the snow."

But the man so cruel-hearted
Had from him turned away,
Scorning both his humble tenant
And what he had to say.
Dorby, then, though stricken sorely
And sad as sad could be,
Said, "May God to thee be kinder
Than thou hast been to me."

Round the poor man's simple table,
That cold and cheerless night,
Wife and children gathered sadly
In the dim taper's light,
While the father took the Bible
Which he before him laid,
Read the holy evening lesson,
And then he knelt and prayed.

Oh, strong were the words of pleading
He sent amid his tears,
High up to the Throne of Mercy
To greet the Father's ears.
Rising from his lowly posture
His faith was stronger grown,
Said he, "Mary, I am certain
That God will hear his own."

While they all sat musing deeply,
And listening to the rain,
Lo! a rapping and a tapping
Were at the window pane.
"Dorby," said the woman softly,
"Your faith is all in vain;
Listen, listen! Don't you hear it?
There's hail among the rain."

Thinking, thinking of her children
Out in the rain and hail,
There sat the wretched mother
With tearful face and pale;
And deep in her heart she cursed him,
The mean, unfeeling man—
And a rapping and a tapping
Were at the window pane.

"Philip, Philip," said the father,
"Quick to the casement, go,
And see what there is that's rapping
There at the window so."
Philip did his father's bidding,
And on the window sill
Sat a friendly raven, tapping
Alike with wing and bill.

"Come in," said the laughing Philip,
And op'd the casement wide,
And the raven thus invited
Did through the window glide.
Right to Dorby went he boldy,
And, perched upon his knee,
Looked around upon the children—
A sly old bird was he!

And the children all were laughing—
Their grief he had beguiled—
But the raven, grimly sat he,
Nor either winked or smiled,
Dorby's sober eyes, too, twinkled
To see the solemn thing;
But the good wife murmured sadly,
"Some evil he doth bring."

"Wife, there's nothing strange about it;
His story soon is told;
Seeks he here with us a shelter
From the bitter night and cold.
And I'm glad that we are able
This night to keep him warm,
For we may not have to-morrow
A shelter from the storm."

Dorby's voice was rather husky
As this he gently said,
And the hand was quite unsteady
That stroked the raven's head.
Then, "The Lord be praised," said Dorby,
"See what the bird has brought!"
From the raven's beak he'd taken
A ring with diamonds wrought.

"Take it quickly," said the woman,
"And sell it in the town;
'Twill pay the quarter's rent-bill,
And—buy for me a gown!"
Sternest words of condemnation
Now from the peasant fell:
"Shame upon you, thoughtless woman!
It is not mine to sell."

Through the darkness and the sleeting
Now went the honest man;
And down one street quick walked he,
And down one street he ran,
Till at last he reached the pastor's,
And told him of the ring.
'Twas the King's most costly jewel,
And Stanislaus was King.

Happy Dorby! happy Mary!
And happy children five,
Whom with daily toil and labor
He scarce could keep alive!
Now you have a little cottage
As neat as it is small,
With no pressing quarter's rent-bill—
You pay no rent at all.

E'en the poor distrustful mother
Now has a little faith,
And right often to her children
This little speech she saith:
"Children, always seek the owner
Where'er you find a ring,
For the Lord is up in heaven,
And Stanislaus is King."

Aunt Lina's Sunshine.

"And what is your name?" said I, as the
child of the friend whom I had just come to
visit passed before me.

"I see Aunt Lina's Sunshine, was the pleasant
answer of Lousia.

"That is a queer name," I said. "Why do
they call you so?"

Shaking back her long ringlets, and looking
up to me with her earnest, speaking eyes, she
said: "Aunt Lina's papa's sister; she is
blind, and cannot see anything, not the pretty
flowers, nor the soft, white clouds, nor the little
birds. She hears the birds sing, though, but
she cannot see the pretty colors. She feels the
warm sunshine, too, but she can't see how
beautiful it makes the meadows look after the
rain. But sometimes when she is sad and
lonely she calls me to her, and I sit on my little
stool by her and say the pretty verses to her
that I learn in the Sabbath school; and I have
learned some hymns, too, and I repeat those to
her, and then she calls me her sunshine. Don't
you think it's very nice to be Aunt Lina's Sun-
shine?"

"Yes, indeed I do. You are a real little
missionary," I said.

"No, I am not a missionary. I know who
the missionaries are. They are people who go
a great way off to the poor heathens that don't
know anything about Jesus, and tell them about
Him. What made you say that I was a mis-
sionary?"

"Because missionaries do good, and you do
good to Aunt Lina, don't you?"

"I don't tell her about Jesus, because she
knows all about Him, and tells me about Him;
and the child stopped and thought a moment,
and then looked up and added, 'No, I am not
a missionary; I'm only Aunt Lina's Sunshine.'
I kissed her broad white brow, but said no
more to her. But although I was silent, I didn't
stop thinking; no, my thoughts were very busy
with all the little girls and boys of my acquain-
tance. I wondered how many of them were
"Sunbeams" in their homes. How many made
themselves the lights of sad hearts by their
cheerful endeavors to make others happy. All
have not an "Aunt Lina," blind to all beautiful
things, and whose heart may be gladdened by
the love of a little child, but many have a sick
friend or acquaintance to whom kind attentions
would come like sunlight, making an otherwise
dreary home bright and cheerful; and all have
friends who are sometimes "sad and lonely," to
whom a word of love or sympathy would be
more precious than the sunshine.—*Band of
Hope Review.*

Sponsors; whence are they?

Sponsor comes from *spondere*. I promise. A
sponsor then is a promiser. In the baptismal
service of the Church of England, the sponsor
is the god-father or god-mother of the child.
Among Presbyterians, Methodists, and Con-
gregationalists, the parents themselves are the
sponsors. They answer for the child, and
promise for it what it can neither answer nor
promise for itself. We hear a great deal of
sponsor's duties and parental vows in connection
with baptism; they are said to be very solemn
and what no one ought to take on himself, with-
out seriously weighing the engagements before
he makes them.

Now it is surely a very natural question for
us to ask, Were there any sponsors required in
Apostolic baptism? Do we ever read of Bap-
tismal vows laid on parents for their children in
the New Testament? If they are so very
solemn, what gives them this solemnity? If
there is no allusion to any thing of this kind,
then they must be of human invention. The
fact is admitted by all, that there is not a single
instance of infant baptism in the New Testament,
neither is there the most distant allusion to
parents being put under vows in connection
with the baptism of their children. But not
only is there no mention of sponsors in Apo-
stolic baptism, there is no room for them. You
cannot introduce any thing of this kind without
making a rent in what Jesus has made whole.
In Apostolic baptism the believer made his own
request to be baptized, and no one was needed
to answer for him—all the vows and engage-
ments he took on himself; and just as we might
expect, there is not even the allusion to any
one else taking them.

Whence then did all this teaching come
from? The answer is obvious. The New
Testament knows nothing of infant baptism,
and it knows nothing of its appendages—spon-
sors, parental vows, &c., but as soon as the
former was made a church ordinance, the latter
must follow. Baptism is connected with repen-
tance, the child can't say it repents, what then
shall be done? Let us get persons who will
promise the repentance of the child. Thus
came sponsors and parental vows at the bap-
tism of the infant. They rose together and
they live together. They are both outside the
sacred writings; neither is a Christian ordi-
nance. You may tack them on to Apostolic
Christianity, but you can't insert them, for
there is no place for them. This administering
an ordinance to unconscious subjects, and obedi-
ence by proxy, is as foreign to the teachings of
the New Testament, as the Romish confession
and the mass are. It is a branch of that system
of Judaism against which Paul never ceased to
fight. It mystifies the gospel, and teaches for
doctrines the commandments of men. It leads
to the most superstitious notions about the babe
on which the minister has put water, being
sater and hotter than other children. It is tra-
dition and not scripture. It is superstition, and
not intelligent faith.—*Canada Baptist.*

Religion amongst the Africans.

The different manifestations of religious
thought in the different races of mankind vary
as much as their physical structure. It is strange
that the same characteristics appear in Africans,
whether they be in their own native country, or
in a state of bondage or freedom amongst Cau-
casians. A love of extravagant language, and
of highly wrought pictures of the imagination
constitute a large part of their religious feelings.
The colored race in this province are, in these
respects, very similar to those in the Southern
states. The following illustrations are from
one of our exchanges:

Let me first give you a normal experience,
and then, perhaps, a specimen or two of wild
or ludicrous ones, and "wind up" with some
attempt at an explanation of the phenomena.

When I proposed giving a normal experience,
I did not mean an ordinary one. This enthusi-
astic people are never converted after the hum-
drum style of average Caucasian mortality.
The candidate for admission to the church is
sitting before me in the front rank of a dense
mass of ebon humanity, his hands crossed, his
face fearfully solemn; or perhaps he is rolling
his head from side to side, his eyes turned so
ecstatically upward that only the whites are
visible. The master's permission is handed me
first of all. I read it—"The bearer of this,
John, has leave to join your church if you,
upon examination, think him fit." I commence:
"Well, John, tell us why you wish to join the
church; why you think yourself a Christian."

"Yes, well, sir," (slow and sepulchral),
"I hearn old Christians say as how if I didn't
git deligion I'd be sartin to sink down to the
burnin' pit when I died; and when I got to
thinking about the fire an' brimstone, I got
mighty skeered, and thought I'd try and do
better. So I sot out to prayin'. But the more
I prayed the wuss I felt, (the sepulchral tone
passes into the holy sing-song) and the more I
prayed the wuss I felt, and the more I prayed
the wuss I felt. There was a great big load on
me, a pressin' me into the ground, 'twas a
long road I was a travellin', and the mud got
deeper and deeper—ah, and I sunk further and
further—ah. But just as I was nigh about to
gin out and go under, I heerd a voice sayin',
(and here the singing tone culminates in a
semi-abeling song) 'Your sins are forgiven,
and you are sot free.' Then the load rolled
off—there was no more mud; I was standin' on
a rock, a big light was shinin' all round me,
and I heerd the angels a callin' of my name."

A strong tinge of the ludicrous was often
given by the poor creatures insisting upon tell-
ing precisely what they were doing the mo-

ment they were converted. One was feeding
the chickens, another "diggin' laters." A
genuine instance occurs to my mind. I was a
boy, and our pastor was examining a negro can-
didate for membership. He had gone through
the preliminaries, which I forget, and had got
to the happy point just where he felt relief.
"Yes, boss, I knowed I was converted jess thar
—I felt so good. I had jess cum to the bank of
the Alabama river, sir, and oh, I was so happy,
it seemed to me that every leaf that rattled
on the trees was a pancake, and the whole
river was flowin' with molasses an' I had nothin'
to do but gether and sop."

Sometimes the ludicrous was mingled with
the weird and horrible. Take the following:

I had cum home from the field, and a burden
was on me, and the preacher's words rung in
my ear; I couldn't be still, so I walked away
off from the negro quarter, fur I couldn't stand
to hear people singin' and laughin'. All of a
sudden it seemed to me I walked in a great
dark valley, over dead men's bones, and a black
hole opened for me at the end, and I went
down, down, down, through the pitchy darkness,
with miserable howlings coming up from beneath
me; at last I passed through a great wide brass
gate, and I knew I was in hell, for there was a
little pond all bubbling and boiling with melted
lead and brimstone, and all round it the ground
was red-hot sheet-iron. I had hardly time to
see all this when the monstrous black devil
jabbed his pitchfork into me, and with one toss
sent me deep under the boiling and burning
lake. As I rose to the top, a host of little
devils punched at my eyes with red-hot forks
till I dived under, but the scorching heat soon
drove me up to meet my tormentors, and again
to dive. After awhile the big devil came, and
fishing me out with his fork, flung me on the
red-hot iron to dance awhile. All this time I
kept trying to pray, but couldn't think of any-
thing to say. At last it came, 'Lord Jesus have
mercy,' and right away I felt the cooling shadow
of the angel's wings as he swept down to save
me; and now here I am alive from the very pit.
All the while such wondrous narratives as
these are being related, the ebon auditors exhibit
the intensest interest. The old brethren and
sisters encourage the fabulist: 'Bless de Lord,'
'Dat's glorious now,' 'He'll come firew (through)
yit.'

Now, whence this strange uniformity of
enthusiastic or supernatural experience?

Scientific, &c.

The "sugar wedding," thirty days after mar-
riage, is the latest fashion.

A Scotch doctor has published a tract an-
nouncing that he has discovered in sulphur a
sovereign remedy for diphtheria and all diseases
of minute fungus growth.

"Well, wife, I don't see how they can send a
letter on them wires without tearing on 'em all
to bits." "La, me, they don't send the paper,
but they send the writing in a fluid state."

"Tom Brown," M. P., suggests that steamers
crossing between Dover and Calais should carry
a supply of balloons, and that people should
make ascension in them, being held down by a
rope, thus avoiding sea sickness.

METEORIC.—The great display of meteors
predicted for the 13th of November, was invisi-
ble in England owing to the prevalence of foggy
weather. In Paris, says *Galignani's Messenger*,
the spectacle was witnessed to great advantage,
and between one and three in the morning the
number of aerolites was so great that they could
not be counted.

A CHINESE ALMANAC is a most extraordi-
nary publication. The days for ploughing, build-
ing, travelling, and marrying are laid down in
it with the greatest minuteness. The whole
period of four seasons is divided into twenty-
four solar terms, each possessing some charac-
teristic name, and corresponding to the day on
which the sun enters the first or fifteenth de-
grees of one of the twelve signs of the zodiac.

ELECTRICITY.—A new mode of testing
armour plates for ships has been introduced and
tried in Chatham dockyard, England, in which
the detection of interior and unseen flaws is
made by means of a magnetic electric current.
The results are described as satisfactory and
conclusive, whether in plates or bars—the small-
est defects even having been discovered.

CURE FOR COLD FEET.—We are assured by
one who has given the experiment a fair trial,
that cold feet, and especially those superlatively
frigid feet that are kept chilled by perspiration,
may be relieved by a simple expedient. This
is to wear cotton socks next the skin, and woollen
stockings outside of them. In the instance of
our informant, the result was successful in
keeping his feet warm and dry. The singular
consequence also ensued, that at night he would
find the cotton socks (next his skin) quite dry,
while the outside stockings would be perfectly
damp.

NITRO GLYCERINE consists of one part of
glycerine which is the essential sweetness of oil,
and three parts of nitric acid. It is thirteen
times as explosive as gunpowder, bulk for bulk.
When it explodes one volume of oil is
converted into 1,298 volumes of gas. It is
heavier than water, and is insoluble, hence it
can be used under water. Flame will not ex-
plode it, but it burns by contact with an ignited
body as long as the body touches it. A heavy
blow with a hammer will explode it. It ex-
tremely ought not to be handled by ignorant,
stupid or drunken men.