

From the New York Observer.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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JANUARY 16.

Lesson 3:

The Prophecy of Zacharias.

LUKE 1: 67-79.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"The Day-spring from on high hath visited us."—Luke 1: 79.

Central Truth:—In Christ shall all nations be blessed.

The visit of the Virgin to Elizabeth continued three months, and she then returned to Nazareth. In the meantime the promised son was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth and was welcomed by their friends with great joy. His father, at the time when the supernatural revelation had been made that a son was to be born to him, asked for a sign that so unexpected an occurrence should be in reality fulfilled according to the angelic promise, and as if to punish him for this implied unbelief, and at the same time to give the sign, he was struck with dumbness, and continued thus for nine months, when, on the occasion of the circumcision of the child, his mouth was opened, and he gave to the infant the name John. This name took the people by surprise, as it was a new name in the family, and they appealed to his father, who, unable yet to speak, made signs that a board or tablet, covered with wax and used for writing, should be given to him, on which he inscribed the words, "His name is John." Immediately the power of speech was restored to him, and the first use which he made of his vocal ability was to break out in praises to God.

The expression, "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost," in verse 67, simply means that he was endowed with the spirit of prophecy and uttered what he did by divine suggestion. The divine affluence, as in the case of Elizabeth and Mary, seems to have taken a poetic form, and Zacharias shows himself also a sacred poet of no common order. This hymn, which composes our lesson, is called the "Benedictus," from its first word. It is a song of praise, and is divided into five stanzas, each of three lines. It contains two parts—the first in verses 68-75, and the second, verses 76-79. It is a song of deliverance and salvation in behalf of the Jewish people, which describes God's interposition in their behalf against their enemies, and may be taken as signifying both temporal and spiritual prosperity. It contains a plain recognition of the redeeming work of the Messiah, who is spoken of (v. 69) as "a horn of salvation," and alludes to the covenant mercies promised to Abraham which were such a precious heritage of the Jewish people.

The second part of the Benedictus refers especially to John as "the prophet of the Highest," and foretells his distinguished career and its glorious results through the preaching of the Gospel. It is a very eloquent description of the benign effects of the proclamation of salvation, illustrating it by the figure of a brilliant luminary dawning on a world of darkness, ushering in a new and brighter day, in the sweet light of which the wandering and benighted nations are to be guided into the way of peace. Better days, brighter hopes, fairer joys, are to come to this poor world through "the tender mercy of God," and through the shining of the Son of Righteousness, whose coming John was to announce, and for whom his preaching was to prepare the way. No finer figure could be employed to describe the Gospel. It is "the day-spring from on high." "It brings life and immortality to light." It illuminates the dark places of sin and the sad homes of sorrow, dispels the gloom of ignorance, and lights up the dark grave with immortal splendors.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Nine months of enforced silence seem to have taught Zacharias all the better to speak the praises of God.

This is only one of many illustrations of the blessings of sanctified sorrow. It was a great affliction to this good man to suffer so long a deprivation of speech. But we find him as soon as the restraint on his tongue was taken off using his powers of speech in a beautiful song to God's praise. It takes God sometimes a long time to get his people's hearts in tune, and the chords are sometimes strained to the highest pitch of tension before their training is complete, but the melodies that come at last are sweet and heavenly. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" and hearts that have been crushed, like the sandal wood, give out their choicest perfume to the faithful yet loving hand of our Heavenly Father.

2. It is possible for Christians now to be "filled with the Holy Ghost" (v. 67). The inspiration of the ancient prophets and Apostles may not indeed be expected in our day, yet believers are still the "temples of the Holy Ghost," and in proportion as he dwells in us will our lives be beautiful and holy and heavenly.

3. God's service implies no degradation.

The "Benedictus" of Zacharias makes it a matter of thanksgiving to God that his people are enabled to "serve him without fear." There is a service which honors those who perform it no less than Him to whom it is performed. Such is the service of God, which is perfect freedom. Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light. If patriots think it an honor to serve their country, let us not consider it any degradation to "serve the Lord."

4. John's life was a short one, but he lived much, which is better than living long.

He had one work to do—to proclaim the coming Christ,—and he did it. A life spent in preaching Christ is a well spent life. John's preaching led him to a bloody grave, as it has led many a martyr since his day, but his life was well spent and fully closed. It was, from beginning to end, a witness for Christ.

5. "The Light of the world is Jesus." No figure so well describes the condition of the unchristianized world as "darkness." Physical, mental, social and moral gloom still overpreads a portion of the world. But where Christ is known there is light. No luminary has spread a wider illumination than "the Star of Bethlehem."

6. Music is the natural language of devotion. It is quite noticeable how the chief actors in the scenes which are now placed before us seem to be inspired to utter their devout feelings in sacred song. Elizabeth, Mary, Zacharias, the angels, Simeon and Anna, all appear to be inspired to adorn this grand occasion with the beauties of music and the glories of song.

And it is appropriate indeed that the great event of the Incarnation, the source of hope and joy to a lost world, should thus be ushered in. The "MAGNIFICAT" and the "BENEDICTUS" are in their right place. It has well been said that "all the choirs and lyres and ringing cymbals of the Creation, between the two horizons, and above, ought to be discoursing hymns, and pouring down their joy, even as the stars do light."

So let it be even to the end. The beginning of the world's history was with the singing of the morning stars. Let its close be with doxologies to Christ.

The South and New England.

The census of New England shows that section of the country to have progressed slower during the past two decades than the South. The cotton States were overwhelmed by the contest of arms, had their property values almost annihilated, and their whole social structure uprooted. On the other hand, New England was benefited by the war. The enormous taxation rendered necessary by the debt, and the dominance of the ultra protectionists in Congress so shaped the tariff as to benefit the manufacturing interests of the Northeast.

Yet we find that the South has shown an increase in population since 1860 far in excess of that of New England. During the last ten years the cotton States have progressed nearly as fast as the ratio of the entire country. Even in those States where lawlessness and violence were most frequently charged, the increase in population has been equal to that in the prosperous States of the West. The Southern States that have had no accession from immigration have kept pace with the Middle States and outstepped the most prosperous New England commonwealths.

Vermont has added only 1835 persons to her population since 1870, an increase of only one-half of one per cent. Maine is actually losing population, while the enumeration thus far in New Hampshire points to an increase of less than five per cent. in the past decade.

Louisiana has now as many inhabitants as Maine and New Hampshire combined, while Texas has more than Maine and New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island together.

In the line of property values the assessment rolls of real and personal property in New England aggregated \$2,717,060,000 in 1870, while in 1880 they were \$2,497,000,000, a decrease of 9 per cent. On the other hand, the Southern States assessed their property ten years ago, at \$2,433,000,000, against \$4,862,000,000 in 1880. The shrinkage in values by the war was, therefore, more than all the wealth of New England at the present time.

A Wonderful Clock.

From the American Agriculturist for January 1.

Mr. Felix Meier, of Detroit, Mich., after nearly ten years of patient labor, has produced a clock which, not excepting that of Strasburg, is the most wonderful clock of the world. It is 18 feet high, 18 feet wide, 5 feet deep and weighs 4,000 pounds. The framework is of black walnut and elegantly carved. Washington sits beneath the marble dome with a colored servant on either side guarding the doors. On the four corners of the face of the clock are four figures, emblematic of the different stages of human life: two are females, one holding an infant, the other with a child; the third is a man of middle age, while the fourth is a figure of an old gray bearded man. All of these figures have bells, each with a tone in keeping with the age represented. The infant strikes its sweet-toned bell at the first quarter hour; the larger bell of the youth rings out at the end of the half hour, followed by the strong resonant tone of the bell of middle age at the third quarter, and the hour closing with the mournful bell of the aged man. Death, represented by a carved skeleton just above the clock face, then strikes the hour, at the same time a carved cupid pops out on either side, with wings, to indicate that time flies. This is followed by sweet music, when Washington, rising from his chair, presents the Declaration of Independence, and a door on the right is opened by the servant, and each of the ex-Presidents, donned in the costume of his time (including President Hayes), face him, and raise their hands, walk across the platform and pass out of sight, at a door which is afterward closed by the second servant. Washington takes his seat, and all is quiet again save the heavy tick of the wonderful time-keeper. Though such a clock shows a great deal of ingenuity, it is of little practical value.

THREE things to govern—temper, tongue and conduct.

MME. THIERS.

THE HOME LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE DEVOTED WIFE OF THE LATE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

Paris Correspondence of the Pall Mall Gazette.

Mme. Thiers was a year older than Queen Victoria and was married six years and a half before her Majesty became the wife of Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. She left school to become the wife of M. Thiers, and as a bride was placed under the care of professors of modern and ancient languages, of history and of literature. If she had had the ambition to shine as an authoress she would have been a brilliant writer. Her style was lively, very original, and yet polished and well-bred. But there never perhaps yet lived a woman who with so many opportunities to dazzle and to play a splendid part in the great world cared less for the applause of human beings. She was extremely beautiful in youth. The outlines of her face were pure, delicate and regular in their proportions. Her shoulders to the end of her life were finely shaped, and her feet and hands were celebrated for the perfection of their form. In the ante-room of the ground-floor suit of rooms in the Place St. George there is a bust by Marchetti which represents Mme. Thiers as she was when she first attended the balls of Queen Marie Amelie. Old Orleansists who then knew her assure me that it was not a too flattering likeness. Mme. Emile de Girardin, when employed by the Guizot Cabinet to write in the Presse, which that Minister had subsidized to write against M. Thiers, paid her tribute of admiration to the resolute loveliness of his young wife. In her "Courtier de Paris" she speaks of the effect it created at a fancy ball given by the Duchesse de Galliera and at another fete at the house of Baroness James Rothschild. Mme. Thiers at the former wore a white satin domino covered over with Brussels lace. Mme. Emile de Girardin, who was inclined to chercher la petite bete, spoke some years later of M. Thiers becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs to enable his wife to make sure that when she invited the Ambassadors to her soirees they would come. It so happened that Mme. Thiers was more free from worldliness of the kind Mme. de Girardin ascribed to her than if she were aspiring to perfect herself in saintliness by humility and the renunciation of earthly grandeur. She would not have gone to nearly so much trouble to receive graciously the highest member of the Corps Diplomatique as the most insignificant friend of M. Thiers.

Mme. Thiers had the intellect of a Parisienne of the faubourgs. A fantastic pedigree is given in this morning's papers of the Matherons, her mother's family, who are represented as having come direct from Auvergne and on very small savings started a retail silk mercer's shop in the Faubourg Montmartre. The truth is they had been in business there time out of mind, were very rich, but satisfied to go on as their forefathers had done. Mme. Thiers, however, had not the intellectual complexion of a bourgeoisie de Paris. In her perspicacity, directness, bluntness, warmth of heart and heroism—for she was as brave as a lioness—she was rather une femme du peuple. Glory she loved, display she hated; and while completely indifferent to what gossiping people said of her plain clothing, her hatred of waste, her administrative capacity, which was erroneously confounded with parsimony, her heart dilated with gladness when she felt the eyes of the world were fixed with admiration upon M. Thiers. Mme. Thiers when she was quite young translated the works of Pliny. She said she liked Terence better than Labiche. It was she who translated for M. Thiers the articles in English and German newspapers on his speeches, his works or his actions—when they were eulogistic. If they were the contrary she put them in the fire and pretended they were lost. The care of administering her household—which was always an important one—left her no time after her mother's death for the study of literature. There were altogether six men servants, three female attendants and a cook, and there were few houses in Paris in which the virtue of hospitality was kept brighter by exercise. A whole tribe of bachelor friends who had grown old round M. Thiers were in the habit of dropping in to dejeuner and to dinner. Barthelemy, St. Hilaire, Mignet, Changarnier, Cousin and Merimee were guests en permanence. Thiers constantly asked visitors who called on him between 6 in the morning and 8 to return and chat with him at one or the other repast. His table without being luxurious was an excellent one, and the set-out was handsome. After dejeuner, if the weather was fine, he took his visitors into the garden, up and down which he briskly walked. Mme. Thiers stood at a door-window. The moment the temperature lowered she stepped out with a loose and well-wadded coat, which she insisted on throwing round his shoulders. Her manner with him at such times was that of a careful and idolizing nurse, and his was that of a petulant child. She always addressed him as "M. Thiers," and he in reply called her "Mme. Thiers." His tastes, whims and convenience were studied by her. She had a fresh complexion when seen from home. At the Place St. George she looked bilious, and she knew why,

but did not mind. M. Thiers happened once to say that green reposed fatigued eyes. She therefore had the curtains dyed that tint and the waists-cottings covered over with green satin, than which nothing is more trying to a lady's complexion. A number of the fair habitués of her salon, to be in tune with the universal greenery there, made a point of dressing in white whenever they went to pass the evening with her.

As M. Thiers rose at 5 Mme. Thiers was also on foot at that hour to look after him, and was too busy with household cares to take a siesta. In the evening sleep often overcame her between dinner and bedtime. The effect of her somnolence was often ludicrous. She would begin a conversation with, say M. Andrieu—also one of the tribe of old bachelor friends—drop asleep in her arm chair, and ten minutes later start up, and without exactly knowing where she was, resume it with somebody else. I have heard her thus talk on the same subject, and as if to the same person, to Louis Herbet, Prince Orloff, Prince Hohenlohe, and the Duc de Broglie. Mme. Thiers, the night the Blouse-blanche mob attacked her house in 1870, faced it and really cowed it. Her courage also rose with danger. She had great pluck, although I believe in her life she never quarrelled with relative or friend. On the occasion of M. Thiers' funeral she defied M. Fourton and won the admiration of republican France by the high tone which she took in communicating with the Government. She was the sovereign of Paris the day on which she preceded M. Thiers' corpse in a gala carriage muffled up in crape to Pere Lachaise, and her popularity had not abated on the day of the first anniversary mass. The line taken by Mme. Thiers and the publication by her of M. Thiers' last political manifesto in a great measure insured the defeat of the Elysee party. She could not resign herself to the subsequent forgetfulness into which his "great memory" had fallen. In Belfort, because he saved it from the Prussians, she took to the very last a deep interest. The poor of Belfort were the object of her particular solicitude, and a quarter of an hour before she drew her last breath she begged—the Mayor of that town having called—that he should be brought to her bedside. It was her wish to send a message to Belfort. But her weakness was too great to speak when he came. She took his hand in one of hers and with the other pointed to a bust of M. Thiers. Doubtless she wanted to express a patriotic sentiment and to connect him with it. It is said that she has bequeathed her house for life to her sister, and on her death to the city of Paris to be converted into a Thiers museum.

Manufacturers Should Go South.

Col. McClure sums up in his paper, the Philadelphia Times, the result of his recent trip through the South, and among other things he says:

"The manufacturers of the North must soon go South with their cotton spindles and looms, and those who go earliest will reap the richest harvest. It is a violation of all the laws of trade to transport the cotton a thousand miles to an inhospitable climate, where water-power is unreliable a third of the year, and where it necessarily costs more to sustain labor than where the cotton is grown. Our struggling cotton factories in Pennsylvania would be earning from ten to thirty per cent. on the great water-powers of the Savannah or the Alabama, where labor is cheap, where the climate is the most genial to be found on the continent, and where the cotton lint can be furnished fresh from the gin. Instead of incurring the expense of packing, of transportation and re-separating the lint, at much cost to the fibre, the cotton should, and soon will, be spun directly from the gin, by cheaper labor, and turned into better fabrics than can be furnished with all the skill of the North. Those who say that capital is not safe in the South either know not what they say or mean to be untruthful. In every Southern State there is a supreme desire to have the factory everywhere that the raw material is furnished, and South Carolina exempts every factory from all taxation for ten years. In both the Carolinas, Georgia, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee, there are regular emigration bureaus, not only inviting but urging white settlers, and even Mississippi has several of the largest and most successful factories in the South. The cotton crop of this year will be worth three hundred millions of dollars, and when simply spun into yarn, it will be worth nearly three hundred millions more. Where in all the world is there so wide and so tempting a field for legitimate enterprise and large profits? I believe that half the whole cotton product will be spun in the South before another ten years, and the succeeding decade will furnish Southern factories for the entire crop. The factory and the school will go hand in hand in the South, and the factory princes from the North will next be bulldozing the black man in the South to vote against the present oppressive tariff upon cotton machinery."

You may write it down as an indisputable fact, that when a man talks a great deal about his religion he is simply exaggerating his capital in order to catch trade.

A KING OF THE PLAINS.

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A FAMOUS FRONTIER STOCK GROWER—HIS REMARKABLE HISTORY.

That John Hittson would die with his boots on was confidently predicted by everybody who knew the great Colorado cattle king. But old cattle buyers in the East who knew him in his early days could hardly credit the dispatch that came yesterday, announcing that the heroic frontiersman had actually come to his end by being thrown from that luxurious vehicle of civilization, a carriage. There were bigger stock growers on the plains than Hittson. Colonel Richard King, on his ranche on the Santa Gertrudes river, Texas, kept 65,000 cattle. Mifflin Kennedy built a board fence thirty-one miles long across the neck of a peninsula projecting into the Gulf of Mexico, and had 30,000 head of cattle and thousands of horses and sheep in the 240,000 acre enclosure. Hittson in his palmiest days never had over 40,000 head of cattle, but he was better known to all cattle men than any of the rest.

John Hittson was born in the woods of Tennessee fifty years ago, and his early years were spent in felling timber, pulling stumps, and breaking ground for crops of corn and wheat. Before he was twenty-five he began to grow discontented with his outlook, and he sought for some escape from a long life of struggle against poverty. The Mexican war had opened up Texas and the adjacent country for settlement, and Hittson made up his mind to go thither to seek to better his fortunes. He sold his Tennessee farm, bought sixty cows and nine brood mares, and struck out into the wilderness beyond the Brazos river. He employed men as fearless as himself to help him, and established his ranche in a country filled with hostile Indians and predatory bands of Mexican outlaws. For the next fifteen years his life was a continual warfare, and his reputation for bold and daring deeds became known far and wide. He was a man of commanding presence, a splendid horseman, and a dead shot. No Comanche who got within range of the long, muzzle-loading rifle that Hittson took with him from Tennessee ever returned to his camp fire. When Hittson opened fire on them from a breech-loader, one of the first repeating rifles ever seen on the frontier, and gave them a dozen shots a minute, his enemies were more than ever convinced that they were dealing with a superhuman being. He carved out a grazing place in this hostile country, and maintained it against great odds in repeated attacks. As civilization approached he moved further on to the frontier, and grazed his cattle up the Pecos Valley into New Mexico. His fortunes in this time had many changes. The bands of cattle thieves and Indians would sometimes attack and kill his cowboys and drive away the herds, but Hittson would rally a mounted force, run down, and shoot or hang the thieves and gather up his cattle again. At other times Indians would successfully drive away his cattle, and, again, severe winters, disease, or bad market would nearly ruin him. But at the end of eighteen years from the time he started out Hittson had 40,000 head of cattle, 50,000 acres of land, and a long bank account. For the past dozen years he experienced more bad than good fortune. Ten years ago he quit the Pecos country, in New Mexico, and bought 20,000 acres of land fifty miles east of Denver, Col. His purchase lay along the only streams in that section of country, and the 200,000 acres of adjoining land, belonging to the government, was valueless except as a grazing ground for Hittson's cattle. He stocked the ranche with 10,000 to 12,000 head of cattle and 400 to 500 ponies, and employed about 300 men. All this property, his house, and all its belongings amounting in value to \$500,000 or more, was vested in his wife. The assigning of the property was made necessary by the series of costly litigations in which he had become involved over cattle of disputed ownership that he had bought.

Mr. Hittson was in the prime of manhood at the time of his death. He was six feet one inch tall, straight, lithe, and sinewy. He was a blond in complexion, and wore his light-colored hair long. He had a finely cut face, the striking feature of which was the firm, square-set jaws, which stamped him as a man of resolution. His eyes were a clear, steely blue, ordinarily pleasant in expression, but flashing fire when he was aroused. Mr. Hittson was usually a genial, companionable man, but when excited by liquor, as he not infrequently was in his later years, he was a dangerous man to cross. He always carried a pair of heavy pistols, and they were used in a twinkling when his passion was up. His cow-boys liked him, but feared him, and his long battles with the Mexicans on the Texas frontier made the herders of that race give him a wide berth. His lifetime on the frontier had made him a sort of law unto himself, and courts and juries were to him slow means of administering justice. He believed in dealing with offenders on the spot, without any waste of time.

As a host on his big ranche Hittson was a royal entertainer, and no one who has been his guest will ever forget his generous, almost lavish hospitality. Other particulars of his death, than that he was thrown from a car-

riage by a runaway horse on Christmas Day, have not been received.

Grimes, of Iowa.

HOW THE OLD GOVERNOR ACTED AS PORTER FOR A SWELL OFFICE-SEEKER.

The following story of ex-Governor Grimes is vouched for by one who knew him well: The Legislature had just convened at the capital of Iowa. Governor Grimes had arrived the night before and taken rooms at a certain hotel—at least so a young aspirant for office from a distant portion of the State ascertained as he drove up and alighted from his carriage at the steps of that public house. The hostler threw off his trunk, and the landlord conducted him to his room, leaving the trunk in the bar-room. Washing his trunk, the young man demanded to have it brought up, and seeing a man passing through the lower hall whom he took to be the porter, he gave him commands in an imperious and lofty tone. The order was obeyed, the man charging a quarter of a dollar for his services. A marked quarter that was good for only twenty cents was slipped slyly into his hand and was put into his pocket by the man, with a smile.

"And now, sirrah!" cried the new arrival, "you know Governor Grimes?" "O yes, sir."

"Well, take my card to him and tell him I wish an interview with him at his earliest convenience."

A peculiar look flashed from the man's blue eyes and with a smile, extending his hand, he said:

"I am Governor Grimes, at your service, sir."

"You—I—that is, my dear sir, I beg—a—a thousand pardons!"

"None needed at all, sir," replied Governor Grimes. "I was rather favorably impressed with your letter and had thought you well suited for the office specified. But, sir, any man who would swindle a workman out of a paltry five cents would defraud the public treasury had he an opportunity. Good evening, sir."

A Characteristic Anecdote About "Old Thad."

Pierce M. B. Young, now a representative in Congress from Mississippi, a Confederate General and a graduate of West Point, tells this story of Old Thad. Stevens: Young came to Washington soon after the war seeking to have his disabilities removed. He accepted the results of the war in good faith. He went to Thad. Stevens, who was chairman of the Election Committee, and Thad. began to play with him, as he sometimes did with those whom he intended to make his victims. He said:

"You are a graduate of West Point, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Educated at the expense of the United States, I believe, which you swore faithfully to defend?"

"Yes, sir."

"You went into service for the infernal rebellion?"

"Yes, sir."

"You were brigade commander of the raid into Pennsylvania, which destroyed the property of so many of my constituents?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was a squad of men under your direct charge, and under your personal command, that burned my rolling mill down?"

"Yes, sir."

Young thought he was gone, but seeing that the old veteran had come into the possession of the last fact, which Young did not dream he knew, it was impossible to deny the truth of his questions. Thad. roared out, "Well, I like your d—d impudence. I will see that your disabilities are removed. Good morning." And the next day the bill passed the House.

A Story of Lincoln.

From the Revue News.

The Rev. James Shrigley, who is well known here, was appointed by President Lincoln a hospital chaplain during the war. Pending his confirmation by the United States Senate, a self constituted committee of the Young Men's Christian Association called on the President to protest against the appointment. After Mr. Shrigley's name had been mentioned the President said:

"Oh, yes, I have sent it to the Senate. His testimonials are highly satisfactory, and the appointment will no doubt be confirmed at an early day."

The young men replied: "But sir, we have come not to ask for the appointment, but to solicit you to withdraw the nomination on the ground that Mr. Shrigley is not evangelical in his sentiments."

"Ah!" said the President, "that alters the case. On what point of the doctrine is the gentleman unsound?"

"He does not believe in endless punishment," was the reply.

"Yes," added another member of the committee, "he believes that even the rebels themselves will finally be saved, and it will never do to have a man with such views hospital chaplain."

The President hesitated to reply for a moment, and then responded with an emphasis they will long remember: "If that be so, gentlemen, and there be any way under heaven whereby the rebels can be saved, then, for God's sake, let the man be appointed?" He was appointed.