

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1878.

FIRST QUARTER REVIEW.

SUNDAY, March 31st, 1878.—Review. Idolatry.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."—Exodus xx. 3.

BIBLE READINGS.—Exodus xx. 1-6. Deuteronomy iv. 14-24. Isaiah xlv. 9-19. Romans i. 18-25.

I. History of Idolatry.

(a) Where first seen in the Bible. Gen. xxxi. 19, 30, 32; xxxv. 4; Joshua xxiv. 2.

(b) What led to it. 1. A corrupt heart. Gal. v. 20; 2. Ingratitude to God; 3. Foolish speculation; 4. High pretensions to wisdom. Romans i. 21-23.

(c) First met in Egypt by God's chosen people. Deut. xxix. 16, 17, 18; Lev. xviii. 3; Ezek. xx. 6, 7.

(d) Influence upon them afterward. 1. In the wilderness. Exodus xxxii. 1-3; Psalm cvi. 19; 2. In Canaan. Judges ii. 2. 11-13; x. 10-14; 1 Kings xii. 28-30; xxi. 25, 26; Isa. ii. 8; Jer. xi. 10.

(e) Cases of idolatry in the New Testament. Acts xiv. 11-18; xvii. 16, 23, 29; xix. 24-28.

II. Forms of Idolatry.

(a) The worship of the "sun, moon, and stars" [having its rise in Chaldea, and spreading through Egypt, Greece, Scythia, Mexico, and Ceylon]. Deut. iv. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 4, 5, 11; Jer. xix. 13; xxxii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3; Amos v. 26; Zeph. i. 4, 5; Acts vii. 42, 43.

(b) The worship of images of beasts [birds, and fishes (being peculiarly Egyptian in its type)]. Exodus xxii. 4; Deut. iv. 17, 18; 1 Kings xii. 27, 28; Judges xvi. 23, 24; Rom. i. 23; Psalm cvi. 20.

(c) The worship of images in human forms [peculiarly Greeks in type]. Deut. iv. 16; Isa. xliv. 13; Dan. ii. 46; Acts x. 25, 26; xii. 22; xiv. 11, 13-18.

(d) Images worshipped in groves. 1 Kings xvi. 33; 2 Kings xiii. 6; 2 Chron. xxiv. 18; Ezek. vi. 13; xx. 28.

III. Some of the gods of Idolatry in the Bible.

Baal, (the sun-god), the divinity of the Phoenicians. 1 Kings xvi. 31.

Ashtoreth, the Phoenician Venus. 1 Kings xi. 6.

Moloch (the fire-god), the deity of the Ammonites. Amos v. 26.

Chemosh, the national deity of the Moabites. 1 Kings xi. 7.

Diana, the tutelary goddess of Ephesus. Acts xix. 34.

Nisroch, an idol of Nineveh. Isa. xxxvii. 38.

Mars, the god of war. Acts xvii. 22.

Mercury, the god of eloquence. Acts xiv. 12.

Jupiter, the supreme god of the heathen world. Acts xiv. 12.

IV. Some of the Rites of Idolatry.

(a) Offering sacrifices. 2 Kings v. 47.

(b) Burning incense. 1 Kings xi. 8.

(c) Bowing down in worship. Dan iii. 6.

(d) Obscenities. Hosea iv. 13.

(e) Cruelties. 2 Kings xvii. 31; xxi. 6.

V. Idolatry Prohibited by God's Law.

Exodus xx. 25; Deut. iv. 14-24. Isa. xlii. 8; Matt. v. 17; 1 Cor. x. 14; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 John v. 21.

VI. Idolatry as seen after trial.

(a) False. Jer. x. 14, 15.

(b) Powerless. Isa. xlv. 20; xli. 29.

(c) Perishable. Jer. x. 11.

(d) Doomed. Deut. iv. 25-28; viii. 9, 10; Hosea xiii. 1-3; Rev. xxii. 15.

VII. Idolatry already largely brought to an end.

(a) By divine judgments. Ezek. xxxvi. 24-28.

(b) By apostolic Christianity.

(c) By Mohammedanism, under God.

(d) By modern missions.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1. What is the first instance of idolatry in the Bible? Gen. xxxi. 19. Where did Joshua see its antiquity? What have been some of its causes? Where was it first met by God's people? What influence had it upon them afterward? What cases of idolatry have we in the New Testament? How widely is idolatry spread to day?

Vs. 2. What was the prevailing form of idolatry in Chaldea? How far did it spread? What idolatry was peculiarly Egyptian? What peculiarly Greek in type? Where do we find star-worship?

Where the worship of beasts? Where the worship of men? Where grove worship? Was there any form of heathen idolatry God's people did not imitate?

Vs. 3. Who was the supreme god of the ancient heathen? Who was the god of the Ammonites? Of the Moabites? Of the world? Who was the god of eloquence? Who was the goddess of the Ephesians? Of the Phoenicians? Who was the god of the Phoenicians? Who made images of Diana in Ephesus? Acts xix. 24.

Vs. 4. What were some of the rites of ancient idolatry? Does modern idolatry differ materially from ancient?

Vs. 5. Where was idolatry solemnly forbidden? Is not that prohibition binding to-day? What does Christ say of the ancient moral law? What does Paul say of idolatry? What idol is worshipped in civilized lands? Matt. vi. 24.

Vs. 6. What has idolatry on trial been seen to be? Has not idolatry largely come to an end already?

Vs. 7. How was it put away from God's ancient people? How did the early apostolic church carry this end forward? How has Mohammedanism, though false, contributed to this end? How have modern missions wonderfully helped on this result? Ought not the work of modern missions, then, to lie near our heart?

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, April 7th, 1878.—Josiah's Early Piety.—2 Chron. xxxiv. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Remember thy Creator in days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."—Ecclesiastes xii. 1.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

Review Questions.

What are our lessons about? What was the other kingdom called? How came they to be divided? How many tribes had Judah? What was its chief city? What beautiful building was there? Who was the first king of Judah? Why was God angry with Rehoboam? How was his anger turned away? Who had brass shields carried before him to the Temple? Who burned his grandmother's idol? Who gained a victory over a million soldiers? Where did those soldiers come from? Who sent men to teach the Bible? Who marched to battle singing? How was that battle fought? Where was a baby hid? Who brought him up? How old was he when he was crowned king? Who made a chest, with a hole in the lid? What was it for? Who took a censer to burn incense? Why was this wrong? How was he punished? Who had a pattern of an idol-altar made? Who prayed to devils? Who cleansed the house of the Lord? Who talked to the Jews from the wall? How was a large army slain in the night? Who was bound with chains? Where was he carried? What did he afterward do?

Boys' Department.

Dark Days.

So the hot July days came and went, and brought pleasure as well as pain to the little room in Crowe's Alley.

The room was emptier than ever, and food was scarce, and bread was dear; but then baby was beginning to walk, and the sun was not so hot, so that Dick was not so tired and cross; and Polly, in her love of making believe, had developed a talent for mimicry that caused many a shrill laugh to echo through the empty room, and even to find its way down the crooked stairs into the court.

"Set the door open, mother," little Billy O'Flannighan, the cripple, used to say; "there's the Polly Marker at it again." And if he could have crept up to the children's garret he would have seen Polly with the blanket tied round her as a skirt, and peacock's feathers in her hair, making believe to the admiring Dick that she was the lady of Grosvenor Square going to court.

She laughed more than she used to do at first, this brave Polly; but when the play was ended, and the boys were in bed, having laughed themselves to sleep over their supper, Polly would turn resolutely away, put her share by into the cupboard, and creep cold and hungry between the blankets. So, as the days slid into weeks, and the autumn weather set in, Dick grew stronger and healthier, and the baby flourished; but

the folks in Crowe's Alley shook their heads over Polly's thin face with its hectic flush, and said aside to one another that she was going the way her father did, and no wonder, poor lamb!

But Polly was very happy; her life was such a busy one, and the boys so good, that the void in her heart was being gradually filled up; and even when the day came that she had to stand on tiptoe and take down the peacock's feathers and the pictures and the china ornaments as a last offering to the pawn shops, she found that she had not time to be so very miserable, after all.

She sat on one of the stools with the pictures in her lap, and made the boys kiss them, and, just for a minute, tears came to her eyes when Dickie, kissing the black head obediently, looked up to ask, "But who is it, Polly?"

"Why, it's father," said Polly, "and dear mother, and you, Dickie, when you were a wee thing like our baby, and Willie—our soldier, Dick, that died." And Dick said, "Oh yes; I 'member," and turned away to play horses with baby round the empty room, while Polly sat on, with all her household gods in her lap, and tears in her frank blue eyes.

"I thought Dick would have remembered," she said to herself once; and then she gathered up the pictures and took them away to the shop, locking the door behind her.

And all the time that the funds were getting lower, and the winter weather was setting in, and pennies were getting scarcer, the nineteen shillings and sixpence lay in the big box by night and in Polly's pocket by day; only, one evening, when the landlord had taken away the box as part payment of the rent, and things were looking serious that the neighbors began talking of the "House," Polly took the money, and, having nowhere else to put it, laid it out in little heaps upon the mantel-shelf, and she and Dick sat down and looked at it.

Baby was fast asleep in bed, the church clock outside had just boomed out ten on the frosty November air, and most of the lodgers were quiet—for the Crowe's Alley folks went to bed early; Polly sat with her thin cheek resting on her hand, and Dick was lying on the ground at her feet, when suddenly the boy said, "Let's count it, Polly."

She must have known instinctively to what he was alluding, for, though she started, she rose with a word, and, with steady fingers, laid the shillings side by side along the mantel-shelf. "Nineteen shillings," she said, slowly, "and the sixpence."

"It seems hardly worth while to leave the sixpence there," said Dick, in a hurried whisper, "does it Polly? If it were ours—"

"If it were ours," said Polly, with brightening eyes, "we'd have a good dinner to-morrow, Dick, and not cheap bread, and we'd give baby milk without water in it."

"And if it were all ours?" said Dick, still speaking softly.

"If it were all ours," interrupted Polly, with a strange look darkening over her face, "we would be happy, Dickie, wouldn't we? Something to eat for a whole month—till Christmas—and something over."

"Oh, every thing," said Dick. "Polly"—and he dropped his voice until she had to stoop to listen—"couldn't we just—borrow it, you know, for a month or so? If it were ours—" And his little childish hand stole out and touched the first shilling on the shelf.

Polly had been sitting as one in a dream, but at the touch she seemed to awaken. The new dark look that had been creeping over her face changed and brightened as she jumped up and put Dick's hand somewhat roughly aside. "If it were ours, we'd spend it, Dick," she said; "but as it is, we'll just keep it safe till we see her."

"But if we never see her?" said Dick, whimpering and half frightened.

"Never mind that," said Polly, decidedly; "if the worst comes, Dick, and we have nothing, why, there's always the House."

"But a work-house," objected Dick.

"Well, we have to work anyway," said Polly, with practical common-sense, "and we may as well work in a house as not—that's my joke, Dick."

Dick laughed, as he always felt bound in honor to do at Polly's jokes; and half an hour afterward, he was lying

fast asleep, with long lashes shading the wistful eyes, and the money quite forgotten; but Polly, remembering the temptation, kept the shillings always in her pocket for the future, and went to bed that night with one other trouble added to her careful life.

But they did not come to the "House," after all, for, when the children had gone to bed that night, Mrs. O'Flannighan held a council of two in her room, and decided that she could work with an easier mind by day if Polly were there to tend Billy a bit, and give him what he needed.

"So I'll pay the rent of the room," Mrs. O'Flannighan said, "and I don't doubt they'll pick up enough to get along for the winter;" for Mrs. O'Flannighan was looked upon as a moneyed woman in Crowe's Alley.

So it chanced that morning after morning, when Dick had gone out with his blacking-box to earn the daily bread, Polly would go singing down stair with the baby to brighten Billy's room with her patient, cheery ways and pleasant face, as she had brightened her own home; and Billy caught the infection, and grew to wonder how he had ever thought the days long, or the pain in his back too terrible to bear, for Polly could show him so many ways of making the time pass. She could make baskets out of nuts, and mice out of apple pips; she could sing and chatter while she worked about; and, best of all, when the sunshine died out and her work was over, she could pin up a corner of the blind, just to show the red light over the gloomy alley, and sit holding his feverish hand in hers, telling him beautiful stories, with quiet baby on her lap; only sometimes she had to stop when she coughed—she had grown to cough a good deal lately—and then they would all sit quite quiet until Mrs. O'Flannighan came bustling in, or Dickie's whistle sounded on the stairs, and Polly had to run out to spend the pennies he had earned.

"She's not a bad child," Mrs. O'Flannighan said to Billy, as she stood one evening watching the slight figure toiling wearily up stairs with the baby—"better than most, I fancy."

"Why, mother," said Billy, flushing at the faint praise, "she's more than that—she's beautiful."

"They were a good lot—always," went on the woman, standing by the window, with her rough arms crossed. "The mother was a likely woman—but fine."

"How fine?" asked little Billy, sitting up in bed and listening attentively.

"Oh, they thought a deal of themselves, for they'd come down in the world—the Markers; but they were quiet folk, and when they got poor and ill we were all sorry for them, and helped them on a bit. Good quiet creatures, but too fine for Crowe's Alley."

"But Polly's not fine," said Billy, with a sob in his voice.

"No, not fine, but too good for Crowe's Alley, all the same—one of the kind that's above this earth by a long way."

"But she's been on the earth such a little while," said Billy, earnestly: "they wouldn't take her away yet. You've been longer, mother, and I doubt you're tired; but Polly 'd never want to get to heaven before me."

"Good gracious me, child!" said Mrs. O'Flannighan, brusquely, "and what's wishing got to do with it, I wonder? Polly Marker may be fit for heaven now, or she may have as many years as I've had to live out first; but, mark my words, Billy O'Flannighan, that, with that cough of hers, and her half starving herself for the little childer, she'll be laid up before the winter's out."

Which remark of Mrs. O'Flannighan was as true as a prophecy, for, when the cold winter sun rose next morning over Crowe's Alley, it was Dick who was creeping shivering about to build up the little fire and make the tea, while Polly lay white and sick upon the bed, with her heavy eyes closed.

"Do you feel any better?" Dickie asked, every two or three minutes; and Polly tried to open her eyes and smile, but she looked so white and still that Dickie grew frightened when Polly sat up in bed, as she did by-and-by, with a red spot on each cheek, and began talking rapidly and moving her hands about. Dickie and baby sat staring at her, and some of the neighbors, attracted by the noise, looked in and gave her water, and smoothed the bed, and

went away looking very grave; but in the twilight Mrs. O'Flannighan came home from her day's work, and when she heard from Billy that Polly was ill, she went hurriedly up to the children's garret to see what was the matter. Dickie had made tea, and was pouring it out for baby and himself in the fast-fading light of the window: they were sitting in shadow, and he was talking softly to the baby as he handed him his little mug; but a bit of the blind was drawn aside so that a shaft of red light lay across the uncomfortable bed and Polly's feverish hands, that were plucking at the coverlet, and across the eager, restless face.

Mrs. O'Flannighan put up a rough hand for a minute to her eyes, then, without a word, she went over to the bed, and, sitting down, drew the uneasy head on to her shoulder and let it rest there; and poor Polly, seeing something familiar in the face bending over her, cried out, "Why, mother!" in a sudden, pleading way. With that her voice broke into sobs, and she cried as she had never had time to cry since her mother died.

"What has she had to eat to day?" Mrs. O'Flannighan asked of the children, who had crept closer to her when Polly began to cry.

"Why, nothing," said Dickie, "only some cold tea. She wasn't hungry in the morning, she said, and this afternoon she's been queer—kind of laughing and crying, like—so we just played about, baby and me, and didn't heed her."

"Poor little girl!" Mrs. O'Flannighan said, softly; "no wonder the fever's got into her head, with nothing to eat. Well, go down now, Dickie, and leave baby in my room, and bring me up Billy's beef tea, and then run round to Dr. Stanley, 5 Greenacre, and ask him to come down to-night."

(To be continued.)

Advice.

How cheap it is! and very often how good it is! yet it sometimes seems that the very best advice is the most unpalatable to the recipient, and the most likely to be disregarded.

"If he only would have taken my advice," says a friendly critic, commenting on Jones' failure, but, then, we all know, and the friend knows, too, that Jones would have been more (or less) than human if he had taken it. For, after all, advice is a sort of moral physic, and who ever takes physic without compulsion? The pill may be sugared, the draught may be spiced, but the flavor is not to be disguised so readily, and even while we press our advice most urgently, we have a dismal consciousness that it will be rejected or forgotten. Nor need we grow impatient over this universal trait, for how could it be otherwise? Do we not all know, or believe we know, our own affairs, our own necessities, our own desires, better than any other mortal can ever know them, even though that other may be our most intimate friend? And no matter how unreserved our confidence, how frank our admissions regarding the circumstances in which we are placed, will there not always be some point or points on which we cannot be fully explicit to any human ear? So, even while we imagine that we have perfectly explained our own position, or have as perfectly comprehended the situation of another, some detail will always be wanting, whose omission changes the whole case; perhaps makes the counsel which seemed so judicious entirely impracticable. Don't worry yourselves then, over the good advice so often wasted on your friends, but try to remember that as you never can occupy their exact standpoint, so you never can be an infallible judge of their proper conduct.

Accept, instead, this role of wisdom; be content to give your advice (when it is asked) with sincerity, to hear it criticised with humility, and to see it disregarded with cheerfulness. Above all, don't remind people too often of what advice you gave them, and your forbearance will win you more friends than your best advice.—Christian Intelligencer.

Often the grand meanings of faces, as well as written words, may be chiefly in the impressions of those who look on them.