

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, December 7th, 1879.—The Heavenly Song.—Rev. v. 1-14.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 9-12.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Rev. iv. Tuesday, Rev. v. Wednesday, Rev. vi. Thursday, Rev. vii. Friday, Rev. viii. Saturday, Rev. ix. Sunday, Rev. x.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The scroll in Jehovah's hand. Vs. 1. II. The call to open it. Vs. 2-4. III. The Lamb opens it. Vs. 5. IV. Homage rendered it him. Vs. 6-8. V. A new song sung. Vs. 9-14.

QUESTIONS.—Where is the scene of the present lesson laid? Whom does John see on the throne? ch. iv. 2. Whom does he see on four and twenty seats? ch. iv. 4. What beasts does he see? ch. iv. 6. What do these beasts resemble? Ex. xxv. 17, 20.

I. Vs. 1.—What book does John see? How was it written? How sealed? Upon what did its contents probably touch?

II. Vs. 2-4.—What call is now made? With what success? Why does John weep over the failure to find one equal to the task?

III. Vs. 5.—Who only is found able to open it? What gave him power? Why is he called "the Lion of the tribe of Juda"? Why "the Root of David"?

IV. Vs. 6-8.—Of what are horns, as here used, symbolical? What homage is paid to the Lamb? Is not this paying divine worship to Jesus? What evidence have we that prayers to him are remembered?

V. Vs. 9-14.—Who are meant by "they" in the words "they sung"? How was the song a new one? What was its sentiment? Whom does it celebrate as having been saved? What beings besides redeemed ones participate in it? What is their ascription of praise? In what grand strain is all creation heard uniting? Who does not care to be one of this heavenly chorus?

The Divisions of the Book of the Revelation—are two in number—(1) In the first (chs. 1-3), after an introductory vision exhibiting the divine perfection and the human sympathy of the great Head of the Church, we have letters to seven churches then existing. Two of these letters we studied in our last lesson. (2) The rest of the book comprises a succession of prophetic visions, in which the most prominent are three series, consisting almost entirely of judgments upon the enemies of God and his people, connected with the opening of seven seals, the sounding of seven trumpets, and the pouring out of seven vessels; and each of these series is preceded or followed by other visions exhibiting symbols of the divine government and of the Church of Christ, in either its present state of service or of suffering or its future state of triumph and glory." ch. 4-22.

The Present Lesson.—The scene of the present lesson is in heaven. ch. 4; comp. Isa. 6. Lying in the right hand of Jehovah (ch. 5: 1) is seen a sealed scroll containing seven skins rolled one over the other, each of which is fastened by a separate seal or as one book, itself fastened with seven seals; but no one is found worthy to open and read its contents (2-4) except the Messiah (5), who appears in the midst of the heavenly assembly as a sacrificed victim with the emblems of divine power and wisdom. 6, 7. As he takes the book, all in heaven and earth and in the world beneath fall down and worship the Lamb and him who sits upon the throne. 8-14. And so the heavenly song of our present lesson is none other than a solemn assent of heaven and earth in rendering adoration to God and the Lamb.

EXPOSITIONS.—Verse 1.—In the right hand, better "on," lying on the right hand; a book, a scroll written on both sides, showing the fulness and completeness of the divine thoughts touching the fortunes of the church of Christ; sealed, see Note.

Verse 2.—Worthy.—It was not merely a question of ability but of worthiness or right.

Verse 3.—No man, properly no one, neither angel nor man.

Verse 4.—Neither to look thereon, that is, with a view of reading it.

Verse 5.—The lion of the tribe of Juda. In Christ the seemingly opposite virtues centre and harmonize. Hence he is at the same time the Lamb and Lion (see Gen. xlix. 8-10); the root of David, Isa. xi. 1, 10; hath prevailed, or acquired the power.

Verse 6.—The four beasts, see Rev. iv. 6-8. These beasts or creatures resemble closely the cherubim; see Ex. xxv. 17-20; Isa. vi. 1, 2; the elders, see Rev. iv. 4. The representatives of the redeemed church, twelve standing possibly for the patriarchs, and twelve for the apostles; seven horns, indicative of dominion and power.

Verse 8.—Vials, or bowls. Verse 9.—A new song, the song of redemption.

Verse 10.—Us, rather "them"; reign on earth, partaking of Christ's triumph in the conquest of the nations.

Verse 11.—Many angels, not cherubic creatures, nor redeemed ones, but heaven's own inhabitants. Thousands of thousands, absolutely innumerable.

Verse 12.—The Lamb, see iv. 11, connecting the Lord with the type of Christ so familiar to the Jewish mind in the sacrifices and the passover.

Verse 13.—Blessing, etc. See 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 11. A universal acknowledgement of Christ's sovereignty.

Verse 14.—Four beasts, see xix. 4. The powers of earth and heaven join in the surrender of all power to the glorified Christ.

For the Teachers of the Primary Class.

John seemed to see a throne in heaven and One sitting on it. There were also twenty-four other seats, on which sat twenty-four elders.

It was God himself who sat on the great throne, and John saw in his right hand a roll like the books which were then used. It was written all over, both inside and outside, but it was sealed so tightly with seven seals that no one could read it. Then a strong angel called in a loud voice to know who was worthy to break the seals. There was no answer, and John felt so disappointed that he wept. One of the elders came and told him not to weep, for there was One who was able to loose those seals who was called the "Lion of the tribe of Juda." John looked, and right in the middle of the throne stood Jesus, like a lamb that had been slain.

He came to the throne and took the book from his Father, and instantly the elders fell down in worship before the Lamb. They all had harps and bowls full of sweet incense, and they sung a new song of praise to the Lamb because he was worthy to open the book. Thousands and thousands of angels joined in the chorus, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb!" And the answering echo came up from all parts of the world, every created being singing praises to the Father, who made all things, and to his Son the Lamb, because he had redeemed the people by his blood, ending with, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." To this wonderful song of praise the elders sang a glad "Amen!" The knowledge of the future is with God. The Lamb was slain to redeem us. Our whole lives should be asong of praise.—Baptist Question Book.

- Answer to Scripture Enigma. No. 47. 1. Gabriel. 2. O badiah. 3. Deborah. 4. Isaac. 5. Silas. 6. Lamb. 7. Omega. 8. Vine. 9. Eden. "GOD IS LOVE."—1 JOHN IV. 8.

- ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS. 11. Manassah. 2 Kings xxi. 7. 12. The Devil. John viii. 44.

Enigma. No. 48. BY LORD MACAULAY. Come let us look close at it—'tis a very ugly word,

One which should make us shudder whenever it is heard; It may not be always wicked, but it must be always bad, And speaks of sin and suffering enough to make one sad; Folks tell us 'tis a compound word, and that is very true, But then they decompose it, which of course they're free to do; But why of the twelve letters should they take off the first three, And leave the nine remaining, as sad as they can be?

For while they seem to make it less, in fact they make it more, And let the brute-creation in, which was left out before.

Let's see if we can't mend it—'tis possible we may, If only we divide it in some new-fashioned way.

Suppose instead of three and nine, we make it four and eight; You'll say, 'twill make no difference, at least not very great;

Yet only see the consequence; that's all that need be done To change the weight of sadness to unmitigated fun.

It clears off swords and pistols, con-scriptions, bowie-knives, And all the horrid weapons by which men lose their lives;

The natural voice of merriment's compressed into one word, Which clears away all sadness whenever it is heard.

Yes, four and eight, my friends, let that be yours and mine, Though all the host of demons exult in three and nine.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS. No. 13. There was once a chariot made of the wood of Lebanon's cedars, with silver pillars, a golden bottom, and a purple covering. Who made it? 14. What king set on fire the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem?

Boys' Department.

Good talk to Girls.

Benjamin F. Taylor, the poet, is a native of Lowville, Jefferson county, and of its venerable Academy, Dr. Taylor's father was the first principal. Recently, Dr. Taylor revisited the scenes of his youth and participated in the reunion exercises at the old Academy. To a young school-girl there, he has addressed a letter so full of sense and fond advice, that it might well have been addressed as an open letter to all girls, and so we repeat what he says:

I call you a girl, but it is not the fashion any more. The girls are gone and there is nobody left but young ladies. I like girls best. There used to be a flock of Carolines in Lowville, and as fair a flock as ever wore muslin.

There were Caroline Collins, Caroline Northrup, Caroline Dayan, and ever so many more. There were Cornelias, Janes, Elizabeths, Marys and Paulines. They were all girls, and they never scorned the title. Now they would be Carries, and Nellies, Lizzies, Mamies, Jennies and Cornies, and young ladies withal, every daughter of them. Let us not forget that affectation is the art of being a fool according to rule. Let us learn to make worsted cats of impossible pink, if we must, but let us know how to make Indian pudding and a golden loaf of corn-bread as well. Let us talk French, if we can, but let us avoid "slang" as we would pestilence and famine. Pure and undefiled English never sounds so musically as it does from the unadulterated lips of a genuine girl. Let us learn the exquisite art of keeping young. You read of Roman ruins. I think I have heard Tyre, Tadmor and Thebes mentioned once or twice, but there is nothing so ancient in all this world as an old dilapidated heart. It is everybody's duty, especially every girl's, to keep young. Now to you and your class-mates:

Dear girls, I pray you read the book of Ruth, That old love-story beautiful as truth; Of one who lives in everlasting youth, And say with her to truth, "Forever thine,"

"Thy God my God, and thy people mine!" So shall you keep in loving step with time,

And life's sweet cadence prove a perfect rhyme; And when at last the song is done, And level shines the dying sun, Another dawn will show its early light, And bid "good morn," though you have said "good night."

—American Rural Home.

The Floating Bible.

Here is an instance of what the Bible, without any foreign teacher, may do in the enlightenment and conversion of men: A testament was washed over-board from one of Her Majesty's ships along the coast of Japan and floated to the dominion of one of the princes. One of the chief men of the prince saw the little volume floating on the water and conveyed it to his master, who examined it, and after making some inquiry from the interpreters attached to

his residence found out it was a copy of the Christian's Bible; and having ascertained that there was a translation of the book in Chinese, he sent to Shanghai for a copy. Then with five or six of his companions, and with a distinguished scholar as his teacher, they gathered together in a Bible-class for its study.

While they could understand much, there were many things they could not understand; and hearing that a missionary at Nagasaki could speak the Dutch language, he sent a messenger to the missionary to get answers to difficult questions, and in this way, through the messenger carrying a question and getting a reply, in due time the head man, with a large retinue of retainers, made his way to the missionary's house and presented themselves for baptism.

What was his statement? I copy it from an address delivered by Rev. Dr. Ferris, of the Reformed Church Mission, delivered at the Mildmay Conference of Missions, held in England, October, 1878:

"Sir, I cannot tell you my feelings when, for the first time in my life, I read the account of the character and work of Jesus Christ. I had never seen, or heard or read of, or dreamed of, or imagined such a person. I was filled with admiration, overwhelmed with emotion, and taken captive by the nature and life of Jesus Christ! We can imagine somewhat the impression that would in such circumstances be produced on such a man, fifty years of age, in the maturity of his powers, a man of education and special sagacity. He sought baptism for himself and two of his friends who were with him. Within a year three others of the same company were also baptized by Mr. Verbeck. Thus an example is furnished of how the truth has been over and over again conveyed providentially to men and women, who, uninfluenced by a missionary, or foreigner, or Christian, have been brought to feel it to be the Word of God."—Bible Society Record.

A praying Parrot.

Captain James Etchberger vouches for the following bird story told in the Baltimore News: About thirty years ago, when in Honduras, in command of the bark Eldorado, his wife, accompanying him, was presented with a parrot, a sprightly bird and a fluent discourses in the Spanish language. The bird was brought to Baltimore, where, when domiciled in the house of the captain, it soon acquired a knowledge of English. The next door neighbor of the captain was a garrulous woman—an incessant scold—forever quarrelling with some one or something. Polly, being allowed full liberty, was pleased to take an airing on the yard fence, and in a short time had learned to mimic the scolding neighbor to perfection, and finally became aggressive. The bird not infrequently rued its impertinence by being knocked off the fence with a broomstick. This brought forth a torrent of abuse from its assailant. Finally the bird's language became so abusive that the captain was obliged to send it away, and Polly was transferred to a good Christian family in the country, where in the course of time it reformed, and became to some extent a bird of edifying piety. Some time ago, while it was sunning itself in the garden, a large hawk swooped down and bore the distressful parrot off as a prize. Its recent training came to its assistance, as at the top of its voice it shrieked, "O Lord, save me! O Lord, save me!" The hawk became so terrified at the unexpected cry, that he dropped his intended dinner and soared away in the distance. Polly still survives the at-tempted abduction.

An Intelligent Horse.

When the navvies were engaged in making the North British line of railway in Scotland, a remarkably active bay horse named Baldie was employed at a section of the work near to the bridge which crosses the Tweed below Galashiels. The special duty of Baldie consisted in the dangerous process of what is technically called "tipping," which is simply dragging the loaded track of earth from the cutting to the end of the embankment. The horse so employed is generally in charge of an active young man, who, along with the

horse, is bound to increase the speed of transit at a rapidly increasing rate, and when attaining its highest momentum, by a sudden jerk of the connecting chain, the horse, though at full speed, is separated from the rapidly advancing truck, generally from twenty to thirty yards from the end of the bank, while, at an angle to the right, he dexterously cleared the line of the truck, which, passing to the mound, is suddenly arrested by a large piece of wood set across the top of the mound so as to catch the wheels, thereby pitching the contents over the mound, while the empty truck retained its position against the block. One day, from some inadvertence, poor Baldie was yoked to his loaded truck of earth, and was rapidly and cheerfully making his way toward its delivery, when both he and his driver were horrified to find that the former empty truck had not been taken in, and that it was standing on the same rails within a few paces of them. The sad doom of Baldie between these two trucks seemed inevitable, as there was neither time nor sufficient distance for his disconnection. But no. With one bound he leaped into the empty truck, and stood upright in it, sustaining the shock of collision, and thereby saved his life, both trucks remaining on the rails. We have often had occasion to think some horses wiser than their drivers, and Baldie's case is certainly a rare instance of animal intelligence.—Ex.

A Good Prayer.

A gentleman, after a brief address at the close of a Sunday school session, raised his hands, and devoutly saying, "Let us pray," looking up to heaven, he uttered these words: "Lord, this afternoon forgive and bless every boy and girl in this school, for the sake of Jesus, our Saviour. Amen." One of the boys, in the fullness of his heart, exclaimed loud enough to be heard by several: "That's the best prayer I ever heard!" You see it was well aimed, and hit its mark. Too much of a good thing badly administered may surfeit and disgust. Let us have our public prayers shorter, and more of them, and there will be more to join and more to appreciate them. More than one Sunday School and social meeting has been depleted in numbers, by long, spiritless and meaningless prayers.—The Helper.

Immortality.

The flowers that delight me die as I gaze on them! My tears have streamed upon the tomb of my father! Within my heart are wants the world cannot meet! I feel that I am capable of a felicity that the world cannot give! But this is God's world, and I am God's creature, and God is good; can I, then—can I possibly conclude, with any show of reason, that this brief life, these fading delights, these tears, and these tombs, are all that a good God has to give me? It would be an unreasonable conclusion, and as unblessed as unreasonable. Such a faith would dishonor God. It would distress my soul. It would hang the pall of an eternal midnight over the whole world, and make me live in it and die out of it in despair!

My reason, then—the whole of my reason—enjoins upon me to believe, though I have not seen it, that there is another world; that God has a good in store for those that please him, better than all he gives them here; that there will be a final adjudication made in righteousness, and that to love God and serve him, and lay up treasures in heaven, are the most reasonable things in the universe. Blessed are they that believe it. They rise above the grossness of the senses. Their immaterial soul anticipates a new heaven and new earth. They look forward to that spiritual body which shall be greeted by the light of the resurrection morn, and shall greet Christ coming in the clouds of heaven to claim his own! Here, then, sinner though I am—frail mortal, dashed about in the world, and not knowing when I shall be dashed to pieces—here, comes affliction! I bare my bosom to thine arrows! Death, I dare thee! Grave, do thy worst! My reason—the whole power of my reason—sustains me when I believe the promise, Because I live, ye shall live also.—Dr. Spencer.

The woman who does fancy work very often don't fancy work at other times.