

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, November 23rd, 1879.—The Glorified Saviour.—Rev. i. 10-20.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 12-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."—Rev. i. 8.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Revelation i. Tuesday, Daniel vii. 9-13. Wednesday, Matthew xxiv. Thursday, Matt. xxv. Friday, 2 Thess. ii. Saturday, Exodus xxv. 31-40. Sunday, Zechariah iv.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The spirit of vision. Vs. 10. II. The use to be made of it. Vs. 11. III. The vision itself. Vs. 12-20.

QUESTIONS.—What is the last book of the Bible called? Who wrote the book, when, and where? How many books and Epistles did John write in all? What, does he say, is the design of his last book? Rev. i. 1. Is the disagreement, of commentators on the Revelation of John, strange? Why? In what do they all agree?

I. Vs. 10.—Where was John in the Spirit? Vs. 9. In what Spirit does he mean? Why did the early Church observe the first day of the week?

II. Vs. 11.—What is John told to do? What great Apostle had labored in some of these cities? How did Paul's work differ from John's? Rom. xv. 20.

III. Vss. 12-20.—What part of the vision which John sees refers to the Seven Churches? What to the seven messengers, or teachers, of these churches? Where do we have a symbol of Christ's lofty rank? Where of his purity? Where of the might of his word? Where of his dominion over death and hell?

THE REVELATION OF JOHN.—We have come to the last book in the Bible, commonly called the Apocalypse, or the Revelations (not Revelation) made by our Lord Jesus Christ to John. It is believed to have been made to John after he was banished to the isle of Patmos by the Emperor Domitian, A. D. 94-95. The Saviour and his apostles had predicted an extensive falling away from the faith. Matt. xxiv. 11-13; 2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Peter ii. 1-2; iii. 3. The result proved the truth of their words. Not a few surrendered their belief in Jesus, and not a few suffered bravely for him. To the latter this book afforded great counsel and comfort. It is a book upon which there has been an almost endless variety of interpretation, and in the study of which it would be exceedingly presumptuous for us to claim the discovery of its chief significance. All agree that it leads on to final victory of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Robert Hall says that "it was permitted John to convey to the churches of his time repeated messages from his ascended Lord, to behold his glory, and to catch the last accents of inspiration. To him it was given, not only to record the life of the Saviour in common with the other evangelists, but to transmit to future ages the principal events and vicissitudes which shall befall the church to the end of time, in a series of visions which revived the spirit and manner, and more than equalled the sublimity, of the ancient prophets." As stated by the writer of the book, its object is to show to the servants of God "the things which must shortly come to pass." Rev. i. 1.

EXPOSITION.—Patmos (now called Patino), the place where the Apostle John received the revelation of this book, was a small island just off the west coast of Asia Minor, only about sixty miles southwest from Ephesus. It is "about thirty miles in circumference," a narrow, irregular, barren, rocky strip of desolation, just the kind of place likely to be chosen by the Roman government as a place of banishment for its state's prisoners.

Verses 10, 11.—Verse 10.—I was in the Spirit.—More exactly: I became (that is, came to be, or was made to be,) in the Spirit. "The Spirit" is doubtless here the Holy Spirit, and this so took possession of John that he had no consciousness of the natural world. On the Lord's day. The first day of the week, almost certainly. John xx. 19, 26; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The Greek word for "Lord's" is here as in 1 Cor. xi. 20, an adjective. A great voice as of a trumpet. Like the trumpet's sound in

its greatness. See Num. x. 2, 9, 10; 2 Chron. v. 12.

Verse 11.—I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.—"Alpha" is the name of the first letter of the Greek alphabet; "Omega" the name of the last, hence the phrase means about the same as "the first and the last," which was added as solemn emphatic repetition. The thought is that the speaker is the Eternal One, First Cause, Last End, and Supreme Sovereign of all things. See xxi. 6; xxii. 13. Compare also verse 18; Ex. iii. 14; Isaiah xliv. 6; xlviii. 12. What thou seest; that is, what thou art about to see in vision, including also the things heard. In a book. On a parchment or papyrus which after receiving the writing was rolled up on a stick and tied with a string, and the ends of this might be sealed. Dan. xii. 4; Rev. v. 1. A book was thus a roll. To open a book was to unroll the scroll; to shut it was to roll it together. The seven churches which are in Asia. Asia is here the small Roman province in the southwest part of Asia Minor. The number seven is here chosen because the number seven is symbolical of completeness; churches representing all churches.

Verses 12-16.—Compare the similar description in Dan. x. 5, 6, and the account of the transfiguration on the mountain. Matthew xvii. 2.

Verse 12.—To see the voice:—that is, to see him whose the voice was. Seven golden candlesticks. Lamp-stands, instead of the one chandelier of the holy place of the temple, with its seven branches there appears seven separate single lamp-stands, symbolizing the fact that no longer did God reveal himself specially in a single centre, as at Jerusalem, but now and henceforth equally in the scattered churches of his saints, churches concordant, but co-ordinate. Compare John iv. 21. "Seven" the perfection of number; "gold" the perfection of material.

Verse 13.—And in the midst of the seven candlesticks.—Christ's chosen place on earth is in the midst of his chosen people. See Matt. xxviii. 20. Like unto the [a] Son of man. John says "a Son of man" not using the favorite title employed by Christ to designate that which originated the title. The human likeness even in the Divine Glory is most significant. Clothed with a garment down to the feet, etc. "The garment and girdle seem to be the emblems of his priesthood." Comp. Ex. xxviii. 2, 4-31. "Golden girdle," symbolic of supreme rank and worth.

Verse 14.—White like wool as [white as] snow. Not the whiteness of age, which, quite contrary to the truth, would imply weakness, loss of manly vigor; but the whiteness of immaculate, glorious purity. His eyes were as a flame of fire. Keen, quick energy of sight, from which nothing is hidden.

Verse 15.—His feet like unto fine brass, etc. "Brass which in a furnace has reached a white heat." Thus the symbolism of fire is retained even for the feet of the Lord. His voice as of the sound of many waters. This comparison rises above that of verse 10, more potent than the voice of "many nations."

Verse 16.—He had in his right hand seven stars.—"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." "In his right hand," as at once in his power, and in his love, holding them, as their loving Keeper, not as a victor the vanquished. Out of his mouth a sharp two-edged sword. This indicates the kind of weapons by which Christ has established and will perpetuate his kingdom. And his countenance, etc. "God is light." Compare Acts ix. 3.

Verses 17-20.—Verse 17.—And when I saw, etc.—Probably the actual effect of the vision of the glorified Christ. And he laid his right hand, etc. The same which held the stars (vs. 16) or angels of the churches (vs. 20). The hand which holds, helps; which keeps from falling, raises the fallen. Fear not. The fear of reverence in which is confidence Christ wants, not that of terror. Matt. xiv. 27.

Verse 18.—I am he that liveth. John's favorite representation of Christ is as "the Life," "the Eternal Life." I John i. 1, 2, and often. And was dead. More exactly, "became dead." Christ was Life, that is, in his own nature eternally, yet he became dead, as man, he met this experience for us. And, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen. Died, was

buried, but rose and so once for all conquered death for himself and for us. And have the keys, etc. The absolute power over death, and the dead, on the grave.

Verses 19, 20.—Write, etc.—The command which required the Apostle to write for the church this last book of Holy Scripture.

TOPICS.—John's personal experience.—Here was a revelation sublimer than was ever vouchsafed to a living man before; no oriental monarch in his palace was ever surrounded by such splendors as flashed upon the astonished gaze of the lonely exile upon Patmos.

Christ's personal appearance.—How different now from him, of whom it was said that "his visage was more marred than any man, not now so changed but that he is still described as "like unto the Son of man."

Christ's description of himself.—What a joy to us to know that "he liveth"; because he lives we shall live also." He hath "the keys of death and of hell." We will not shrink from the portals of the under world, seeing that Christ our Elder Brother hath the keys of death and hell.

What this Apocalypse is to us.—Perhaps the time has not yet come for the church to comprehend it in all its breadth of meaning.

For the Teachers of the Primary Class.

Picture John alone on the rocky island with the waves of the sea dashing up. Though this seemed so sad a thing, God made it to work out good, for then the most wonderful things were made known to him.

THE CHURCHES: Lamps.
THE MINISTERS: Stars.
JESUS: The Sun.

Explain that though these lamps meant the seven special churches named, yet that all churches are to give light. Think of what John heard. The first words were "Fear not." Name some other times when Jesus said "Fear not." He used those words when John saw him in almost as glorious a form on the Mount sixty years before. Get the children to tell you why they need not fear where Jesus is, and of what they need not be afraid. We need not fear hell for Jesus holds the key of that also, and will not open it to let us in, if we are his children, nor can any one else open it when Jesus locks it.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 45.

S amuel,	S atan,
E li,	C hrist,
A bsalom,	R edeemer,
R uth,	I mmanuel,
C anaan,	P eter,
H innom,	T homas,
	U z,
T abor,	R ome,
H ermon,	E ve,
E den,	S arah.

"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- Goliath of Gath. 2 Samuel xxi. 20.
- Methuselah the son of Enoch lived to be 969 years, Enoch was translated that he should not see death. Heb. xi. 5.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 46.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

- A musical term frequently used in the Psalms.
- The name of a prophetess who lived in the time of our Saviour.
- A famous valley of mourning mentioned in Zechariah.
- One of the words Belshazzar saw.
- An ancient prophet whose bones caused a dead man to revive and stand on his feet.
- The city in which King Zedekiah's grandmother lived.

These names put in order and the initials read down they give the name of an early prophet, and the initials shew the name of this mother.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- What was the name of the man mentioned in the Bible who killed a lion in a pit, on a snowy day?
- What became of the brazen serpent by means of which the Israelites were cured of the bite of the fiery serpents?

A "tremendous" dispute is raging in Madras over a hair from the beard of the Prophet Mahomet. The relic is enclosed in a case guarded by an official, who receives a pension from the Government, and six fanatical Mussulmans are disputing for its possession. The High Court of Madras has been appealed to.

Booths' Department.

The Child's Influence.

"There is 'Whiskey Bill,' who used to drive the old white horse in front of a 25 cent wagon," repeated the man in tones of surprise.

"Yes."
"Well, now it's a curious case," he slowly continued. "We all thought he had gone to the dogs, for sure, for he was drinking a pint of whiskey a day, but a few months ago he braced right up, stopped drinking, and now I hear he's in good business and saving money. It beats all, for the last time I saw him he seemed half underground."

When you go home at night and find that all is well with your own flesh and blood, do you go to sleep reasoning that the rest of the world must care for itself? Do you ever shut your eyes and call up the hundreds of faces you have met during the day, and wonder if the paleness of death will cover any of them before the morrow? When you have once been attracted to a face, even if it be a stranger's, do you let it drop from your memory with your dreams, or do you call it up again and again as night comes down, and hope it may lose none of its brightness in the whirling mist of time?

So "Whiskey Bill" was hunted down. And inquiry here and there finally traced him to a little brown cottage on a by-street. He sat on the steps in the twilight, a burly, broad-shouldered man of fifty, and in the house three or four children gathered around the lamp to look over a picture-book.

"Yes, they used to call me 'Whiskey Bill' down town," he replied, as he moved along and made room. "But it is weeks since I heard the name. No wonder they think me dead, for I've not set eyes on the old crowd for months; and I don't want to for months to come."

"They tell me you have quit drinking. One could see that by your face."

"I hope so. I haven't touched a drop since February. Before that I was half drunk day in and day out, and more of a brute than a man. I don't mind saying that my wife's death set me to thinking; but I didn't stop my liquor. God forgive me, but I was drunk when she died, half drunk at the grave, and I meant to go on a regular spree that night. I was low down, sir, and I was no better than a brute those days."

"And so you left your motherless children at home and went out and got drunk?"

"No. I said I meant to, but I didn't. The poor things were crying all day and after coming home from the burial I thought to get 'em tucked away in bed before I went out. Drunk or sober, I never struck one of 'em a blow, and they never ran from me when I staggered home. There's four of 'em in there, and the youngest isn't quite four years yet. I got the oldest ones in bed all right, and then came little Ned. He had cried himself to sleep, and he called for mother as soon as I woke him. Until that night I never had that boy on my knee, to say nothing of putting him to bed, and you can guess these big fingers made slow work with the hooks and buttons. Every minute he kept saying mother didn't do that way; and the big children were hiding their heads under the quilts to drown their sobs. When I had his clothes off and his nightgown on, I was ashamed, and put him down, and when the oldest saw tears in my eyes and jumped out of bed to put her arms around my neck I dropped the name of 'Whiskey Bill' right then and forever."

"And little Ned?"

"Mebbie I'd have weakened but for him," replied the man as he wiped his eyes. "After I got the child's nightgown on, what did he do but kneel right down beside me and wait for me to say the Lord's Prayer to him! Why, sir, you might have knocked me down with a feather! There I was mother and father to him, and I couldn't say four words of that prayer to save my life! He waited and waited for me to begin as his mother always had, and the big children were waiting, and when I took him in my arms and kissed him, I called heaven to witness that my life should change from that hour. And so it did, sir, and I've been trying hard to

lead a sober, honest life. God helping me, no one shall call me 'Whiskey Bill' again."

The four children, little Ned in his night-gown, came out for a good-night kiss, and the boy cuddled in his father's arms for a moment and said,—

"Good-night, pa—good-night, everybody in the world—good-night, ma up in heaven,—and don't put out the light till we get to sleep!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

A Dinner in China.

A lady formerly living here, now the wife of an American officer in China, writes to her friends at home an account of a ceremonious dinner which she attended recently. The feast was given by the "Deputy," and was attended by only seven persons—three American gentlemen, two American ladies and two Chinese men—beside the host. Describing the Deputy as a "lovely old man," the letter says:

"He passed to me first a cup of hot wine with a graceful bow; it was only after that one could sit down. He made the tour of the table and gave each guest his wine, accompanied by the chin-chins (bows) from both parties. Before each guest were three plates, about the size of a little girl's tea-set plate—three inches in diameter. On these plates we ate all our dinner, except the soups, which were put before us in small bowls. Each one had his chop-sticks and a two-pronged silver fork. In a few moments, as Mrs. M. and I could not use them very well, we were given our own forks and knives. At each place was a big pile of melon and apricot seeds, and this pile was replenished constantly during the four hours we were at the table. Between the courses everybody was cracking and eating away at the melon seeds. They were not very good, of course, yet it was amusing to nibble at them, and they came in hot from the oven, and on the whole did not taste badly.

"On the table, when sat down, were eight dishes of preserved fruit of different kinds. They were all on those small dishes, but put one on top of the other to make a kind of pyramid, and in a row along the centre of the table were other dishes, larger in size, and holding the more substantial things. On one were slices of lobster and salted walnuts—very good, both of them. On another were goose gizzards out in thin slices; on another shrimp salad, and on another thin slices of chicken. These were all meant to give an appetite for the dinner which followed. I sat next to the old Deputy, and he helped me from all the different dishes within his reach, only a mouthful or so from each, though. When we had tried all these things, the first course was brought on, and as I suppose you imagine, it was 'bird's-nest soup,' and very good, too. We have nothing like it at home. After that we had stewed chicken with young onion sprouts.

"The third course was cold mutton served with raw turnip cut in long, thin strips.

"Fourth—Awfully good—was pigeon eggs in a kind of acid soup.

"Fifth—Cucumbers stuffed with chopped fish.

"Sixth—Roast chicken served in very small bits with mushrooms.

"Seventh—Sharks' fins.

"Eighth—Mutton dumplings. [After that there was a little rest, and we walked about the garden, going to work again after half an hour.]

"Ninth—Pork Soup.

"Tenth—Stewed mussels.

"Eleventh—Champignons and spinach made together.

"Twelfth—Ham in slices.

"Thirteenth—Stewed pigeons and bean curd.

"Fourteenth—Fish.

"Fifteenth—The muscles or fibres of flowers.

"Sixteenth—Sea-slugs (something awful to look at, just like leeches with pimples on them.)

"Seventeenth—Mushrooms and bamboo sprouts made together.

"Eighteenth—Cakes and bitter-almond sauce.

"Nineteenth—An entire roast pig [It was brought on, and then taken away and carved for us. I thought the dinner at an end when we had the cakes, and was taken aback to see this animal make its appearance. They served first the crackle or skin. It was A No. 1, and we began to eat each anew; second, they served the lean meat; third, they served some fat, and then something else, all four from the pig.]

"Twentieth—Rice, with chicken soup, salted cabbage, salt bean curd, chestnuts grown in water, and I don't know what.

"After that, tea, and it was over."

This was followed by a two-days' headache.—*Hartford Courant.*