

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, December 28th, 1879.

FOURTH QUARTER REVIEW.

BIBLE READINGS.—[At the opening of the School.]—Psalms xix. 7-11; John v. 39-47; Acts xx. 17-21; 1 Tim. iii. 15-17.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Psalms xix. 7.

Review may be conducted by either of the two following modes:—

I. THE WAY OF LIFE.

I. Belief in the Bible.—Psalms cxix. 9, 11; xix. 7-11; John v. 39; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

II. True Ideas of Sin.—Its nature.—Gen. vi. 5; Jer. xvii. 9; Eph. ii. 3; Ps. li. 5. Its extent.—Rom. vii. 18; John iii. 6. Its penalty.—Gen. ii. 17; Ezek. xviii. 4; Rom. vi. 23; Gal. iii. 10; Rom. i. 18.

III. Conviction of Sin.—Our ill desert.—Ezra. ix. 6; Dan. ix. 7; Ps. xxv. 11; xxxii. 5; Luke xviii. 13; Rom. vii. 24. The insufficiency of self-righteousness.—Rom. x. 3, 4.

IV. Justification.—Impossibility by the law.—Rom. iii. 20; Gal. v. 3, 4. Possible only by faith in Jesus Christ.—Rom. i. 17; viii. 3; x. 4; Gal. iii. 13; iv. 5.

V. Repentance.—Enjoined on sinners.—Matt. iii. 2; Luke xiii. 3; Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; xvii. 30. A grace of Christian life.—2 Cor. vii. 10; 2 Sam. xii. 13; Matt. xxvi. 75.

VI. Profession of Religion.—Matt. x. 32; Mark viii. 38; 2 Tim. i. 8; ii. 12; Rom. x. 9, 10; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38.

VII. Holy Living.—By means of the Word of God.—Psalms cxix. 104, 105, 161, 169, 170, 171. By means of the Holy Spirit.—John xiv. 26; Acts ix. 31; Rom. xv. 16; 1 Cor. vi. 19. By means of Christian action.—John vii. 17; Ps. cxi. 10; Rev. xxii. 14.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1.—What shows the genuineness of the Bible?

Vs. 2.—What is the nature of sin? What is its extent? What is its penalty?

Vs. 3.—What is conviction of sin? What two things does it show to us?

Vs. 4.—What is meant by justification? Why is it impossible by the law? Why by faith in Christ alone?

Vs. 5.—What is repentance? Who are to repent? When will it cease as a Christian grace?

Vs. 6.—Why should a Christian profess faith in Christ? How should he profess it?

Vs. 7.—How is God's Word a help to holy living? How is the Holy Spirit? How is the Christian action?

II. REVIEW OF QUARTER'S LESSON.

Our lessons for the last quarter have been from Hebrews, the Epistles of James, Peter and John, and Revelation.

I. Hebrews.—Designed to confirm Jewish Christians in their faith, and prevent them from being induced to abandon Christianity by the arguments or the persecutions of the other Jews. The Epistle argues that Christianity is superior to Judaism, just in proportion as Christ is superior to the angels, to Moses, and to the Jewish high priests: therefore do not go back to Judaism, but "hold fast your profession" of faith in Christ.

II. The Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude.—seven in all—are often called "Catholic" or "General" Epistles, because not addressed (except Second and Third John) to any particular person or church, but to Christians in general.

James writes to Jewish Christians, urging them to bear their trials with patience and joy, and to show their faith by their works; and gives many beautiful and striking precepts as to various duties. Read some of them, especially in chap. iii, on the use and abuse of the tongue.

(2.) Peter speaks to Christians who are "in heaviness through manifold trials," and have a "fiery trial" awaiting them; but see with what an outburst of joy he begins, in i. 3-9. And then he urges Christians to holiness, humility, subjection to every lawful authority, and imitation of Christ's example. His First Epistle is full of sweet sayings to learn by heart.

(3.) John teaches that we must love God, and show it by walking in the light, and keeping his commandments; must love God's people, and show it by doing them good; must love the old

Gospel, "which we had from the beginning," and have nothing to do with the new-fashioned false and immoral teachings. His Second Epistle, to a pious lady and her children, and his Third, to the devout Gaius, give charming pictures of character and life. Read Second John to the class.

III. The Book of Revelation has two great topics.—

(1.) It shows the Redeemer, now exalted and glorious (chap. i.), observing the churches (ii, iii.), while worshipped in heaven (iv, v.); as conquering his enemies (xix. 11-16), while dwelling among his glorified people in the New Jerusalem (xxi, 22 ff.), and promising to come quickly (xxii. 20).

(2.) It shows that Christianity will have terrific struggles with many different enemies, days of darkness and partial defeat (vi, viii, x, xii, xiv, etc.), but will at last gloriously triumph (xix, xx); and so the saints must have faith and patience (xiii. 10; i. 9; ii. 10.) Question on each of these three divisions.

The course of study, terminating with the present lesson, has covered a period of seven years, and has embraced selections in order from all parts of the Scriptures, so as to bring into view the whole Bible, and the Bible as a whole.

The Bible is not such a book as man could have constructed, if he would. The volume is the product of about forty different authors, writing under every conceivable diversity of circumstances, at far distant dates, and who were, therefore, unconscious of each other's purpose, and incapable of acting in concert. The earliest of these writers is separated from the latest by an interval of at least a thousand years.

As a matter of fact, and about which there is no doubt, immense multitudes of the human race of the most diverse nations—nations differing by every conceivable variety of custom, history, and culture, but including amongst them all the most prominent in modern science and civilization—have somehow come to regard the Bible as intelligibly one, which both discriminates it from all other books, and proclaims its own identity.

1. THE BIBLE.—Wonderfully independent of race. It has been spontaneously received by men of far more various races and nations than any other religious books ever have been.

2. Among the singularities of this book is the prodigious literature which it has evoked. This mysterious book (the whole or part of it) speaks no less than two hundred languages and is daily learning to speak more. This book has done more to fix and preserve the language into which it has been translated, to retard the progress of change and corruption, than any other single cause.

3. No other book has left so many or so deep traces on human literature. There are none that are so often cited or alluded to; none furnishing so much matter for apt illustration or so often resorted to for its vivid imagery and energetic diction.

4. Inordinate has been the influence of this book, as compared with any other, on the imagination of men, especially as seen in poetry, sculpture, painting, and music.

5. Again, amid all the advance of thought, the Bible finds no book or collection of books arising to supplant it, or even to compete with it. It keeps its place of supremacy, unapproached and unapproachable.

"THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOREVER."

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Question on the following topics of the lessons during the quarter:

Jesus is our Great High Priest.—Heb. iv. 14-16; v. 1-6.

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of Faith.—Heb. ix. 1-12.

Jesus is the Motive for Work.—Heb. xi. 1-10.

Jesus is the Perfect Pattern.—James ii. 14-26.

Jesus is the Perfect Saviour.—1 Pet. ii. 19-25.

Jesus is the Propitiation.—1 John i. 1-10.

Jesus is the Glorified Saviour.—1 John iv. 7-16.

Jesus is the Open Door.—Rev. i. 10-20.

Jesus is the Lamb that was Slain.—Rev. iii. 1-13.

Jesus is the Temple and Light.—Rev. v. 1-14; xxi. 21-29; xxii. 1-5.

Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star.—Rev. xxii. 10-21.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Booth's Department.

Answer to Enigma.

No. 50.

- 1. Cenchrea. Acts xviii. 18. 2. Haman. Esther vii. 10. 3. Abithophel. 2 Sam. xvii. 14. 4. Rizzah. 2 Sam. xxi. 10. 5. Ishbosheth. 2 Sam. iii. 14. 6. Tabitha. Acts ix. 40. 7. Yoke of oxen. 1 Sam. xi. 7. 8. Nazareth. Luke ii. 59. 9. Esther. Esther iv. 16. 10. Vashti. Esther i. 12. 11. Eli. 1 Sam. iv. 17. 12. Rechab. Jer. xxxv. 5, 6. 13. Festus. Acts xxiv. 27. 14. Achan. Josh. vii. 21. 15. Isaac. Gen. xxiv. 23. 16. Luke. 2 Tim. iv. 11. 17. Eglon. Judges iii. 25. 18. Tiberias. Mark iv. 39. 19. Horeb. Exod. xvii. 6.

CHARITY NEVER FAILETH.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- No. 17. Jehoshaphat.—2 Chron. xx. 21. 18. Zechariah viii. 5.

Bible Enigma.

No. 51.

- 1. God made Adam out of dust, But thought it good to make me first; So I was made before the man, To answer God's most holy plan. 2. My body he did make complete, Without an arm, or legs, or feet; My ways and actions did control, Yet fashioned me without a soul. 3. A living being I became, And Adam gave me soon a name; Then from his presence I withdrew, No more of Adam ever knew. 4. I did my Maker's laws obey, From them I never went astray; Thousands of miles I ran in fear, Yet seldom on the earth appear. 5. Now God in me did something see, And put a living soul in me; But soon of me my God did claim, And take from me that soul again. 6. Now as soon as this soul had fled, I was the same as when first made— Without an arm, or feet, or soul, I travel now from pole to pole. 7. I labor hard, both day and night; To fallen man I give much light; Thousands of people, young and old, Shall by my death great light behold. 8. No fear of death shall trouble me, For bliss or woe I ne'er shall see; To heaven I shall never go, Nor to the dismal shades below.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- No. 19. Give the names of the two men whose lives measured the whole time between the creation and the flood? 20. Twice ten are six of us, Six are but three of us, Nine are but four of us, What can we possibly be? Would you know more of us? I tell you more of us: Twelve are but six of us, Five are but four—Do you see?

No Brains.

Judge Ray, the temperance lecturer, in one of his efforts, got off the following hard hit at "Moderate Drinkers."

"All those who in youth acquire a habit of drinking whiskey, at forty years of age will be total abstainers or drunkards. No person can use whiskey for years with moderation. If there is a person in the audience before me whose experience disputes this, let him make it known. I will account for it or acknowledge that I am mistaken."

A tall, large man arose, and folding his arms across his breast said:

"I offer myself as one whose experience contradicts your statements."

"Are you a moderate drinker?" asked the Judge.

"I am."

"How long have you drank in moderation?"

"Forty years."

"And were never intoxicated?"

"Never."

"Well," remarked the Judge, scanning his subject from head to foot, "yours is a singular case; yet I think it is easily accounted for. I am reminded by it of a little story. A colored man with a loaf of bread and a bottle of whiskey, sat down to dine, on the bank of a clear stream. In breaking the bread he dropped some crumbs into the water. These were eagerly seized and eaten by the fish. That circumstance suggested to the darkey the idea of dipping the bread into the whiskey and feeding it to them. He tried it. It

worked well. Some of the fish ate of it, and became drunk and floated helplessly on the surface. In this way he easily caught a large number. But in the stream was a large fish, very unlike the rest. It partook freely of the bread and whiskey with no perceptible effect. It was shy of every effort of the darkey to take it. He resolved to take it at all hazards, that he might learn its name and nature. He procured a net, and after much effort caught the fish, carried it to a colored neighbor, and asked his opinion in the matter. The other surveyed the wonder a moment, and then said: "Sambo, I understand dis case; dis fish is a mullet-head, it ain't got any brains." "In other words," said the Judge, "alcohol affects only the brain, and, of course, those having none may drink without injury."

The storm of laughter which followed drove the "moderate drinker" from the house.

Work, Work.

Idleness is more injurious than toil—rust eats faster than labor wears. The man to go crazy is not the one that has a dozen irons in the fire. The madhouse is often replenished by men of leisure, who mope about, thinking of themselves, until reason is dethroned. In sanity often manifests itself in endless mental repetitions,—in fixed ideas, the mind running in a rut around a circle, and being unable to entertain new thoughts. Hence persons of great concentration of thought oftener become insane than those whose mental field is more diversified. Changefulness is a normal state. Motion is a law of the universe. From the particle of dust at our feet, to man, the last stroke of God's handiwork, all bear the impress of the law of labor. The earth is one vast laboratory where decomposition and reformation are constantly going on. The blast of nature's furnace never ceases, and its fires never burn low. The lichen of the rocks, and the oak of the forest, each work out the problem of their own existence. The earth, the air and the water, teem with busy life. The world is animated with the same spirit. Onward unceasingly, unwearied, age after age, it pursues its course—itsself with all it contains, a perpetual lesson of industry to man. The joyous song of labor sounds out from the million-voiced earth, and the rolling spheres join the universal chorus. Action is indispensable to physical, mental and moral vigor. It is a law of nature that a certain quantity of work shall produce a certain quantity of good to man. If we would have a well-developed physical frame and material good, there must be physical labor. Mental strength and the exploration of the depths of philosophy are the result of ceaseless mental activity. The maturity of Christian character is reached only by the man who does what his hands find to do, with his might. The true nobility of this world are those that pour into the current of life the honest vigor of toil.

We cannot too highly honor the faithful, industrious man, who by his economy and patient labor is building up the welfare of this world.

A Serpent among the Books.

One day a gentleman in India went into his library and took down a book from the shelves. As he did so he felt a pain in his finger, like the prick of a pin. He thought that a pin had been stuck by some careless person in the cover of the book. But soon his finger began to swell, then his arm, and then his whole body, and in a few days he died. It was not a pin among the books, but a small and deadly serpent. There are many serpents among the books now-a-days; they nestle in the foliage of some of our most fascinating literature; they coil around the flowers whose perfume intoxicates the senses. People read, and are charmed by the plot of the story, by the skill with which the characters are sculptured or grouped, by the gorgeousness of the word-painting, and hardly feel the pin prick of the evil that is insinuated. But it stings and poisons. When the record of ruined souls is made up, on what multitudes will be inscribed, "Poisoned by serpents among the books!"

Lovers should be careful how they act in the country, for potatoes have eyes, corn has ears, and beans stalk.

Climate, and That Sort of Thing.

No. 2.

What are the facts regarding the climate of California—which for permanent residence is the best of the places mentioned? Why, that while advertisements re-echo with the little difference in temperature from Summer to Winter, in almost every part of it there is a change of about forty degrees every twenty-four hours, of which nothing is said. In San Francisco you go out in the morning with your thinnest Summer clothing. Remain till two o'clock, and you will require as much as you need here in mid-Winter,—and that every day of the year. Even in the great health resorts of the Southern part of the State, the invalid must get in doors and stay there after the sun gets an hour or two high, and nothing less than your thickest quilts and blankets will suffice for the bed-covering. The place to suffer from cold is not in these Provinces in February, but in California in midsummer.

Then, too, our distant friends ravish us amid our snow and ice with enchanting pictures of green fields, bright flowers, and orange orchards, yellow with fruit, which certainly is pretty to think of when the thermometer gets much below Zero. But how few among those thus charmed are aware that the greater part of California—we believe the same is largely true of Florida—is entirely destitute of grass or trees,—at least that we would call such—that therefore anything which we would regard greenness, is there utterly unknown, that dust incrusts and saturates everything, that those who have never lived there are strangers to the annoyances of insects and reptiles, that no snowstorm can compare in unpleasantness with the dust storms there so prevalent, and that their endless monotony of cloudless skies and sun-cracked plains, renders change of any kind luxurious. To pass in a single day from the depth of Winter to Midsummer is indeed delightful. But what of a journey from our delicious Autumn to a land where not a drop of rain has fallen, or scarce a cloud been seen for three quarters of a year? Let it not be forgotten also that during that period our far-Western friends can only consume, and that in order to make a farm there, not only has stubborn soil to be broken and rendered cultivable, but water must be procured if you have to go into the bowels of the earth a thousand feet for it, or convey it along the surface a score of miles.

The truth is, let one-half the industry, economy and self-denial be practised here that our people in distant lands know, and this would soon be made an Eden almost as perfect as the picture our fancy paints, of the places far away. A little observation and experience abroad is the great thing necessary to convince both sick and well that we are living in the best spot in all the world, and the only trouble is our people don't know it. It is here that solid comfort may be enjoyed, such as native Californians never dreamed of. Here we have civilization and refinement, education and religion, and a Sabbath. And here one dollar will procure as much of either luxuries or necessities, as several there. Our wise men are the men who stay at home, or the few who, having been taught in the school of experience abroad, have been spared to return and tell the tale.

But, after all we have said, and all that can be said, there will no doubt continue to be some for whom a school no less severe will suffice. "Experience teaches fools," which we hope does not quite prove that all are wholly such who will allow themselves in this matter to be taught by no milder means. But whatever may result from this statement of facts, we will at least enjoy the satisfaction of having done our duty, and cleared ourselves of responsibility.

P. H. T.

Wolfville, Nov. 21, 1879.

Said Rev. John Brown to his theological students:—"Young gentlemen, ye need three things to make you good ministers—learning, grace, and common sense. As for the learning I will try to set you in the way of it; as for grace, ye must always pray for it; but if ye have not brought the common sense with ye, ye may go about your business."