

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson IV.—JULY 25.

THE COVENANT WITH NOAH.

Genesis ix. 8-19.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 12-14.

From the time of Abel's death the sinfulness of man increased. There were godly men, such as Seth and Enoch, but corruption extended. The deluge was finally announced. Noah was commissioned to build an ark; he was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. ii. 5), as well as a man who walked with God, but his example and precept failed to effect a change.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."—Genesis ix. 13.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Covenant with Noah, Genesis ix. 8-19.
T. The Wickedness of Man, Genesis vi. 1-22.
W. The World Drowned, Genesis vii. 1-24.
T. Safety in the Ark, Genesis viii. 1-22.
F. A New Life, Genesis ix. 1-7.
S. Preparing for Floods, Matt. vii. 21-27.
S. Encircled by the Bow, Rev. iv. 1-11.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 9: Gen. vi. 8; Isa. liv. 9.
With vs. 10: Psa. cxlv. 9.
With vs. 12: Gen. xvii. 11.
With vs. 13: Rev. iv. 3.
With vs. 15: Exodus xxviii. 12; Lev. xxvi. 42, 45; Ezra xvi. 60.
With vs. 16: Gen. xviii. 13, 19.
With vs. 18: Gen. x. 6.
With vs. 19: Gen. v. 32; x. 32; 1 Chron. i. 4.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH HIS CREATURES.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Covenant, Vss. 8-11. II. The Token, Vss. 12-17. III. The Fulfillment, Vss. 18, 19.

QUESTIONS.—What penalty did God visit upon Cain? Who was on God's side in the last lesson? Who in this? By what means was Noah saved? Who were saved with him? How long were they in the ark?

I. Vss. 8-11.—What is a covenant? With whom is this covenant established? For how long is this covenant to stand? (Vss. 11, 12, 15, 16.) On what two points is it made? Why did God specify these points? Why will not God again send a flood?

II. Vss. 12-17.—What is a token? What token of his covenant did God appoint? What causes a rainbow? Had none been seen up to that time? On what is the rainbow always seen? What will God remember when he looks upon the bow? What should we remember when we see it? Does God need this reminder? (Num. xxiii. 19.) Why does he use it? What is expressed by the rainbow in Rev. iv. 3, and Rev. x. 1?

III. Vss. 18, 19.—In what year was the Deluge? In what year was the Book of Genesis written? What state of the earth at this latter date is indicated in vs. 19? How many years is it now since the Deluge? What further proof do we have of the fulfillment of the covenant? Why did God send the Deluge? How many persons were saved from it? By what means? How long were they in the ark?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 8.—God spake. How, is not indicated. The simplest way is to suppose, in an audible voice, with human speech. Whether the voice proceeded from a visible form, it is not necessary to conjecture. Such hints as the present seem to show that God held intercourse with primeval men whom he chose for this high honor, freely and frequently enough to lay the basis for the religious tradition that we find, often, indeed, grossly perverted, current among all races and ages of mankind. It is not unlikely that the universally-diffused idea of a Divine Being is traceable rather to the fact that "God spake," than to any intuitions on the subject that may be innate in the human mind. To Noah and to his sons with him. These were the sole surviving male representatives of the human race after the deluge. It is observable that God limits his address to the males of Noah's family.

Verses 9, 10.—I, behold, I. God's personality is strongly emphasized by this impressive repetition of the person-

al pronoun. Besides this, the immutability and inviolability of the engagement into which the speaker enters, are thus made very striking, as assured by the character of him who speaks. God does not, at first, name himself otherwise than by the pronoun "I." Who the "I" speaking was, Noah, just escaped, with his household, from that all-overwhelming flood, could have no doubt. In verse 16, he expressly names himself. Covenant. Solemn engagement, not here between God and man, for man fulfils no condition on his part; but of God toward man, freely made through grace. The covenant was not simply with Noah, but with Noah's posterity; and, what seems remarkable, with every living creature besides. This presents God as condescending to make himself responsible, even to the irrational creatures of his hand.

Verse 11.—The promise given, in the form of a covenant established thus with man and beast, is that no flood should again occur to destroy life from the earth. The promise is two-fold: First, that life shall not be destroyed again by a general flood; and, secondly, that there shall not be a general flood to devastate the earth.

Verse 12-17.—These verses, with much emphatic repetition, declare the perpetuity of the covenant, and designate a sign of the covenant, to remind both man and God. This sign is the rainbow. It is not necessary to infer that the rainbow had never before appeared in the cloud, though this is the most natural impression to take from the language employed. It may possibly be that, until the deluge, it had not rained on the earth. For chap. ii. 5, is not certainly to be interpreted of rain. Perhaps the splendid phenomenon of the rainbow did then first salute the eye of man, when the sun, after being so long obscured, came out at length, and amid the dispersing clouds of the deluge rains, suddenly spanned the sky with that radiant arch. Still, let us remember that every time that celestial bow appears, it is God that sets it in the firmament. Accordingly, it may have been that what was a well-known and familiar phenomenon was now erected into a sign. It was a gracious method of condescension to human ways of conceiving things.

Verses 18, 19.—These verses distinctly state that the population of the globe was exclusively derived from the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. That Canaan was Ham's son is here mentioned, by way of preparation for the narrative to follow just after the verse with which the lesson closes. The descendants of Shem occupied Syria, Chaldea, parts of Assyria, of Persia, and of the Arabian Peninsula; the descendants of Ham may best be associated in the popular mind with the Egyptians and Phoenicians as their representatives (the Canaanites, dispossessed by the Jews, were derived from Ham); the descendants of Japheth occupied Asia Minor and the European borders of the Mediterranean, whence they were diffused over Europe and parts of Asia. Our race is of the Japhetic stock.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Teach that Noah was saved for the same reason that Abel's offering was accepted, because he believed God and obeyed.

Tell of the flood of sin, which will surely destroy all who care only to please themselves, and take no thought about pleasing God. Explain that Jesus is this ark, and just as God said to Noah, "Come thou into the ark," so Jesus calls us, "Come unto me." There is room in this ark for all; but we, too, must "Believe and obey."

Bring the story quickly down to the landing and the thank-offering. Ask, Would Noah be all the time in fear of another flood? The loving God saved him from this fear, by making him a beautiful promise. Here, not only tell what the promise was, but explain the word Covenant, and so prepare the way for future lessons. Also show how much more it was than merely a promise never to bring another flood on the earth.

Children are so used to these things, that they take them simply as a matter of course. Use this lesson so that whenever they see the bow, or even

think of one, it will remind them of God's goodness, faithfulness, and care.

Describe a bow with its seven colors; give the names of the colors in the rainbow. God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you. There were two parts you see: God's part and our part. So let this bow help us to remember three things about ourselves, and four things about God. How many does that make? One for each color.

Write these three things about ourselves at one end of the bow: FAITH, which is to believe God so strongly that we will obey him fully, like Noah. HOPE, or look at the bright side of everything, for God is caring for us. LOVE, for we should love God for all that the bow is a sign of.

At the other end of the bow write these four things about God: The bow tells of his LOVE in giving us so much; of his MERCY, he might have destroyed the world again and again; his POWER, none but God has power to keep such a promise; his TRUTH, we may be sure that he will keep all his promises.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boutique Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 81.

- 1. Long o'er thy face the shadow lying Had daily marked Time's onward way; But ten degrees now backward flying Time's shadow must retrace its way.
2. Too late, too late! His brother came In subtilty, and stole with lies. The blessing he too late would claim, The birthright he had learned to prize.
3. A spell to soothe the monarch's breast When troubling spirits vex his soul, To bring refreshment, peace, and rest, And make the sickening spirit whole.
4. Let him be this who feels no love For Him who all our love doth claim, That faithful love which bids us prove Not all unworthy of His name.
5. Unto this angel thou mayst write: Who overcomes I own my child; A few shall walk with me in white, If found with garments undefiled.

The initials and finals of these words give two names: As brothers once they walked in love, But one inconstant turned aside, Forsook the path that leads above, For present peace and worldly pride.

The other, loved and loving, stayed, Nor shunned to share the captive's doom, And still his loyal friendship made A light within that prison room.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 68. Behead a small bough, and leave a conceited fellow; behead again and leave a ship's style of dress. Behead pretense, and leave a joint; behead again and leave a tense of the verb to be. Behead a dwelling for cattle, and leave an important piece of furniture; behead again and leave power. Behead a sea-monster, and leave hearty and well; behead again and leave a beverage. Behead a platter, and leave a little behind; behead again and leave the past of eating.

No. 69. Form a square of words of a sharp weapon an enclosed space to rise up violently a small pie.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 80.

BIBLE PROBLEM.

176 (verses in cxix. Psa.)—150 (whole number of Psalms): 2 (letters Paul wrote to Timothy)—3 (times Joash smote upon the ground) x 7 (ill-favored kine)—50 (shekels; David paid for threshing-floor): 20 (number of barley-loaves with which Elisha satisfied one hundred men)+16 (Azariah's age when he began to reign)—3 (rows of hewed stones in the court of Solomon's Temple)+5 (golden candlesticks on either side before the oracle)+7 (churches to whom John wrote)—3 (times Paul was beaten with rods) x 3 (times he was shipwrecked)—4 (things very little upon the earth, but are exceeding wise)—1=16, his age.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 66. Pilgrimage. Misanthropy. Anthem. Disappointment. Amusement.

No. 67. April.

Pupil—I know how many days there are in a year—three hundred and sixty-five and a fourth. Parent—Is that so? Where does the fourth come in?—Pupil—Fourth of July.

How one Woman was Converted to Missions.

BY MRS. C. M. LIVINGSTON.

"The poor women and girls are so taken up cleaning their houses and dishes, and preparing their daily meals, that they will not give themselves up to thinking in the least." So writes Miss Blunt concerning the women of India. It was something of the same sort that prevented Mrs. John Williams from giving herself up to thinking about anything but her own private affairs. Not that Mrs. Williams gave herself up to scrubbing floors and windows, and cleaning pots and pans with her own hands, but she was "taken up" all the same. When Christ was a babe on earth there was no room for him in the inn, so today many a heart is so full that Christ and His cause are turned out. If a heart is full how can it hold more? Do not suppose that there was nothing done by Mrs. Williams. She superintended all her work and did much of her own sewing; as her family was not small and her income not large and she kept but one servant, it took a vast deal of thinking and worrying to keep the Williams family up to the standard, which was one not of neatness and comfort simply, but that she should live in the same style as those of her friends whose income were possibly twice as large as her own, that her children's clothes should be just as fine and as fashionably made as theirs, that she herself should be able to make as good an appearance as the best when she went into society, that her parlor should be furnished as far as in her lay, with all the elegance and taste that the law of the fashionable world required. This was the grand aim to which she bent all her energies.

Mrs. Williams was a member in good and regular standing of an orthodox church. She regularly occupied her pew in the sanctuary, and when she had no other engagement, attended the weekly prayer-meeting, but the most persistent and zealous member of the Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society had never succeeded in inducing her to attend their monthly meetings, but just once—She took pains to explain it carefully to her conscience that she believed in Foreign Missions, but that didn't prove that it was necessary for her to spend a whole afternoon each month hearing dry reports and "papers" about countries with outlandish names. What good did that do anyway? It was mysterious—how ladies could do justice to their families and spend so much time out. As for herself she could scarcely keep up with her calls.

She did not see the need of women having a society by themselves either. Her husband always contributed to Foreign Missions, and always would probably, (it's true he did, a dollar a year!) and was not that just as well as for her to be bothering her head about it?

"There!" said Mrs. Williams one bright afternoon in April, as she glanced from her window. "There comes that Mrs. Brown. I know what she's after. She wants me to go to that stupid missionary meeting. I suppose this is the afternoon for it. I promised her I would go again sometime—sorry I did too. That's just as much sense as some persons have; think that one can drop everything and go to a missionary meeting—in the spring of the year, too, when there is so much sewing to be done," and she hastily instructed Bridget to tell Mrs. Brown that she was "engaged." So Mrs. Brown went on her way to the meeting, and sat in heavenly places, and had her heart stirred with new love and zeal, while Mrs. Williams sat at home, and worked dilligently on a dress of frills and lace and embroidery, and many weary stitches. At the close of the day she congratulated herself that she had accomplished a fine afternoon's work.

There were whole seas of sewing to be waded through, Mrs. Williams said, before she could have any spare afternoons. There was the dressmaking, all her own dresses to be remodeled after the present style, besides new ones (when Mrs. Williams had a dressmaker in the house—to use her own words—she "almost worked herself to death"); then there was all the other sewing. It really was appalling to think of the amount of ruffling and tucking and side-pleating and puffing that must be gone through, before the wardrobes of herself and her little daughters would be complete. Then there was the house cleaning, the

smallest detail of which required her personal supervision, for Mrs. Williams was elaborate throughout; all her house-keeping was squared up to certain fine lines. If she ever had a morsel of time from these things, stern necessity compelled her to spend it in fancy work, for tidies, and sofa pillows, and bracket covers, and stand-covers, and mats were indispensable. When Mrs. Williams was asked to subscribe for "Woman's Work For Woman," she assured them that she knew already all about woman's work that she desired to.

It was all done at last—the spring-sewing and the house-cleaning, and the summer heats had come. The day was warm, and Mrs. Williams, in a cool, white wrapper, had established herself on the parlor sofa with a book. She had neglected to tell Bridget that she was "not at home," and just as she was in the most absorbing part of one of George Eliot's absorbing novels, a caller was ushered in. "Mrs. Brown! that missionary woman again! Was ever anyone so persecuted before? To go, was out of the question. It was too hot; and besides she did not in the least feel like going to a meeting of any sort. She wanted to finish her book; so she told Mrs. Brown that she was very much worn out with over exertion, and the day was so warm that she would not venture out. She should probably fall asleep in the meeting if she went. It seemed that even when there came a time that work did not fill Mrs. Williams' heart. Satan was on the alert to pre-empt it, and keep her from all Christian activity.

About this time Mrs. Williams received an invitation to a party in the very highest stratum of society. She was holding a counsel with herself, and doing some very close thinking on the all-important subject of her wardrobe and had come to the usual feminine conclusion that "positively" she had "nothing to wear," when she was interrupted by a call from the collectors of the missionary society—those faithful, punctual collectors, whose visits were as sure as the sun and the dews. Mrs. Williams had decided that self-defence required her to become a member of that society; afford it she must, in some way.

What a relief it was to learn that only ten cents a month constituted one a member of the society. She answered quite graciously that she should be most happy to throw in her mite. If Mrs. Williams could have had a peep into the collector's books and have seen that Mrs. A and Mrs. B subscribed fifty cents a month, and that Mrs. C and D subscribed one dollar a month, and others whom she copied and followed, were even benevolent to the amount of two or three dollars a month, then Mrs. Williams would have compassed sea and land to procure the money before she would have allowed her name to be among theirs with that small amount set after it.

Having disposed of the collectors, Mrs. Williams sallied forth on a shopping expedition, in high spirits at having come off so easily, and yet a placid feeling in her conscience that now she had contributed to "foreign missions." She spent the morning in weighing the merits of this piece of silk and that, and finally purchased a dress, rich and costly, and some soft filmy laces of marvellous beauty at a marvellous price.

And so the busy days went on, dress-making, house-cleaning, calling, canning, pickling, parties, pottery and fancy-work, time for it all. How could one think much about such far away interests as heathen women when her hands and heart were so full?

Sometimes we call such, "Marthas," and make light of the fact that we have loaded ourselves down with such heavy burdens, and take comfort in the thought that one of the women whom Jesus loved was in the same condemnation, but we forget that her anxious house-wifely cares were for Jesus. Dare we say as much for ours?

One morning Mrs. Williams was not bustling about with her usual activity. She sat in her own room with a grave, troubled face. She was in deep thought, and it was not some scheme for adding to her wardrobe, or the furnishings of her house, that formed the subject of her meditations. Perhaps the days are not passed when the Lord speaks to a soul. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon