

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson I.—JULY 4.

THE CREATION.

Genesis i. 1-3; ii. 4-8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1-3.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”—Genesis i. 1.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Creation, Genesis i. 1-3; ii. 4-8.
T. The First Four Days, Genesis i. 3-19.
W. The Last Three Days, Genesis i. 20-31; ii. 1-3.
T. No Other Work, Isaiah xlv. 6-23.
F. Man's Supremacy, Psalm viii. 1-9.
S. Joy in the Creator, Psalm xxxiii. 1-22.
S. Praise to the Creator, Psalm cxlviii. 1-14.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

With vs. 1: John i. 1, 3; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2; xi. 3; Psalm xxxiii. 6, 9; Isaiah xlviii. 13.
With vs. 2: 2 Pet. iii. 5; Eph. iv. 18; Rom. i. 21; Job xxvi. 13; Isaiah xl. 12, 13; John iii. 5.
With vs. 3: Isaiah xlv. 7; xl. 26; Job xxxvii. 15; Psalm lxxiv. 16; John i. 5, 9; 2 Cor. ii. 6; 1 John ii. 8.
With chap. ii. 4: Gen. i. 1; Psalm xc. 1, 2.
With vs. 5: Gen. i. 12; iii. 23; Psa. civ. 14.
With vs. 7: Gen. iii. 19; vii. 22; Dan. v. 23; Acts xvii. 25, 28; Isa. ii. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47; John v. 25, 26; iii. 16; xvii. 3.
With vs. 8: Gen. iii. 8; Isa. li. 3; Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7.

GOD THE CREATOR.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Creator, Vss. 1, 3, 4, 7. II. The Creation, Vss. 3, 7. III. The Created, Vss. 1-3, 4-8.

QUESTIONS.—What is the meaning of Genesis? Name some beginnings which are recorded in the Book of Genesis. By whom was this book written? How could Moses know the events he here records?

I. Vss. 1, 3, 4, 7.—Repeat the Golden Text. By what other titles is the Creator presented in vs. 1, 3, 4, 7? What variation of meaning is there in these titles? Why is God alone named as the Creator? (Isa. xlv. 18.) What is meant by “the beginning”? What earlier period for God's existence is named in Ps. xc. 2? What attributes of God do we discover in this part of the lesson?

II. Vss. 3, 7.—What means of creation are indicated in vs. 3, 7? What means of creation are indicated in other verses of Genesis, chap. i? Read Psa. xxxiii. 6-9. What is meant by “created”? Of what three parts of creation is this term used? Why of these only? What is meant in chap. ii. 1, by “finished”? How many distinct periods or days are noted between the first creative act and the finishing? Give the characteristic of each of these periods. By whom was this work of creation accomplished? (John i. 3; Eph. iii. 9.)

III. Vss. 1-3, 4-8.—What objects are named in these verses as created by the Lord? What others are named in chap. i? Acts xiv. 15? From what were all these objects made? (Heb. xi. 3.) For what creative act did David pray? (Ps. li. 10.) What is true of every Christian? (2 Cor. v. 17.) How does this new creation come to pass? (2 Cor. iv. 6.) To what end is it wrought? (Eph. ii. 10.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 1.—In the beginning. “Beginning” is, of course, a relative word. Beginning of what? Beginning of history, or, Beginning of the universe? Which? There is no real difference between these two ideas; for when the universe began, history began. God. The existence of God is taken for granted. This is the most conclusive form of assertion. Created. This word expresses creation from nothing. In the beginning of the universe, the universe must necessarily have been created. For the very purpose, it may be, of excluding the notion that the matter of the universe always existed without being created, this phrase, “In the beginning,” was introduced. The heaven and the earth. This is the Hebrew phrase for the universe. The Hebrew language had no single word for expressing at once the whole sum of created things. To the eye, there was the earth, with what belonged to it; and there was the heaven, or the sky, with what it contained; and

there was nothing besides. “The heaven and the earth” became thus early to man the verbal sign for the universe. The being of God—his creative power, his creative wisdom, the historical fact that he did create, the historical fact that he created everything, the historical fact that he created everything out of nothing—all these points are in this first verse of the Bible, the simplest and the most sublime sentence of five words in any human language. The English makes the number of words just double.

Verse 2.—Without form and void. Waste and empty; not reduced to order, and not endowed with productive energy. Science points to the same original condition of our planet. The nebular hypothesis, so called, now regarded with much favor by almost all scientific men, supposes that, as the first process of what we will call creation, space was filled with one vast mass of nebula, or vapor of matter, which resembled a shapeless and lightless cloud. The deep. Perhaps, the space then filled with nebulous matter. Moved. The original word implies a vibrating, throbbing movement. It is the word used for the brooding of fowls upon their eggs. The sense of it wonderfully accords with the guesses of scientific men as to the method of creation. The motion in the vast cloud of vaporous matter which, as scientific men guess, developed that present order of things, is here expressly attributed to the direct agency of God.

Verse 3.—That light should be said to have been created before the sun, used to afford infidels a supposed good reason for sneering at this account. But science now, in its own way, after six thousand years, has arrived at the same idea. Read with the emphasis, in the last clause, not on was, but on light.

CHAPTER II. Verse 4.—These. This word does not refer to what precedes, but to what follows. The same form of expression occurs ten times elsewhere in Genesis, uniformly with a prospective reference, (as likewise occasionally in other books). There is also an additional reason for this view in the next word, namely, generations. This word does not mean the origin, or the coming into being, of the heavens and the earth. It means the products springing from the heavens and the earth—the births, or generations, derived from them—in a word, the history of them, commencing with the moment at which their creation was complete. In the day. Note, that the word “day,” here, must include six days; since six days were occupied in the creation spoken of. This establishes it; that the word “day,” in Genesis, is not always to be taken as a day of twenty-four hours. Lord God. Previously, “God,” standing alone, has been the Divine name. Now, “Lord,” or, to transfer the Hebrew word, which is the better way, “Jehovah,” is prefixed. All this story of creation, if it be true, must have been communicated by God to some man for no man could have found out truth by himself. Earth and heavens. The order is inverted, perhaps because the earth is to be more prominent in the following narrative.

Verses 5, 6.—These verses, according to the best scholars, bear a different sense from that given them in our Common Version. Dr. Conant, agreeing substantially with other scholars of like high rank, translates: “Now there was yet no plant of the field in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not yet caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. And there went up mist from the earth, and it watered all the face of the ground.” “The plant [shrub] of the field,” and “the herb of the field,” are not to be taken as including all vegetable growths, but only such as supply sustenance to man in the form, first, of fruit, secondly, of edible seeds—for example, wheat—and such accordingly as were in a measure dependent on human tillage and culture. “The mist” may indicate simply what we now see going on in the process of evaporation, with subsequent rain-fall; or it may refer to a period of time in which an envelope of vapor encompassed the globe, supplying it with moisture to quicken vegetation.

Verse 7.—Lord God. “Jehovah God.” Formed. Not the same Hebrew word as that translated “create” in chap. i. 1. This verse gives the material out of

which the forming took place. Man. “The man,” that is, the man that had already been mentioned. Dust of the ground. The Hebrew language could furnish no better phrase to indicate that, chemically considered, the constitution of the physical nature of man is the same as that of the earth. Such is probably the sense, rather than that a portion of pulverized earth was moulded into a human form. Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Figure, for making him live. The breath is the universally natural emblem of life. The nostrils are the avenues for it, outward and inward. That the life was imparted by God, is the chief thought. Some good authorities hold that this expression implies the communication of a spiritual nature. The evidently and conspicuously physical character of the imagery, is against this. That, however, man had a spiritual nature, is clear from chap. i. 27; for he was made in the image of God. A living soul. The Hebrew word, here translated “soul,” does not distinctively mean the spiritual nature. It is sometimes applied to animals. For instance, in chap. i. 20, 21, 24, 30.

Verse 8.—Eden. Hebrew for “delight,” “pleasure.” Eastward. That is, from the point of view of the writer, and his first readers. The site of Eden is not identified with certainty.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

From the last lesson question how long did Jesus lay in the grave? What then happened? How long did he stay on earth? Where did he then go? Had he ever been in heaven before? Why did he ever come from heaven? How long had Jesus been in heaven?

Then shew that there was a time when there was no people in the world, no animals, no birds, no trees, no world at all! But there never was a time when there was no heaven, never was a time when God did not live in heaven, and his Son Jesus Christ with him. They always lived, and they always will live.

Do you say that children cannot comprehend this? They can do what is better; they can believe it.

Show the two parts of the Bible; teach that the New Testament tells us of the time when Jesus first began to live on earth. The Old Testament takes us back to the beginning of the world. Which have we been studying from? Now we are going to study from the other.

To make things out of nothing, is called Creating. God only can create. What wonderful power Jesus had long before he was born in Bethlehem, for it was Jesus who spoke the word that had power to create.

Man cannot make a fly. Only God can give the breath of life. If the breath were to stop, what then? Who makes it keep on?

Children were made to love, praise, and glorify God. Explain what this means. A knife, pencil, key, almost anything will serve to show what they are good for? What becomes of things that are good for nothing? What becomes of a child that is good for nothing?

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 78. WORD-PICTURE.

“A thousand dark noble all bend at the board; Fruits glisten, flowers blossom, meats steam, and a flood Of the wine that man loveth, runs redder than blood; Wild dancers are there, and a riot of mirth, And the beauty which maddens the passions of earth. ‘Bring forth,’ cries the monarch, ‘the vessels of gold; Which my father tore down from the temples of old; Bring forth; and we'll drink, while the trumpets are blown, To the gods of bright silver, of wood, and of stone; ‘Bring forth,’ and before him the vessels all shine, And he bows unto Baal, and drinks the dark wine.”

—Selected.

- CURIOS QUESTIONS. 59. One of the kings of Israel was told that he should “be turned into another man.” What was his name? 60. Who set up a stone and called it Ebenezer? 61. Take all the letters in the words—“A little uncle”—and make of them one word signifying mental. 62. Of all the letters in—“A tub is dry” make a word meaning having no sense. 63. Of all the letters in—“No charm in a ball,” make the name of a President of the United States.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 77. A DOUBLE ACROSTIC. E leaza R S ina I T opa Z H ar P E lish A R aama H

Initials, ESTHER. Finals, RIZPAH.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 57. C A S C O A T H O L S H O R E C O R E A O L E A N

Aunt Flora's Answer.

No. 58. The words to complete Aunt Flora's Broken Rhymes are in italics in the following BROKEN RHYMES, which also require complementary words of the same style to mend them. Find them out. Aunt Flora's scolding never made you —, Her sympathies, though cold, were never —, And her old pies were marvels of high —. Poor Flora.

Her homespun dress, though scant, was made with —, Her harmless cant would neither cure nor —, And, like the busy ant, she knew no —. Good Flora.

A nameless charm with face and form did —; No harm she did, but graciously would —, Her arm to guide you safely to your —. Kind Flora.

A heart may seem of stone if grief it —; Her tone to you was ever like a —; One wise was she among the foolish —. Wise Flora.

—Harper's Young People.

Select Serial.

Florence Walton,

OR, A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER XVII.—AUNT GRACE'S CHANGE.

Miss Markwell scanned the young face narrowly: “Then are you happy in your determination?”

Although in the days which would follow there might come to her struggles with self and the world, might come lonely heartaches and even doubts, yet in that moment of communion with the Saviour Florence truthfully answered,

“Yes, auntie, I am happy in whatever path my Father may mark out for my feet.”

Aunt Grace sighed again as she turned away—not, as in former days, with a feeling of intense pity for what she then considered the narrow strictness of her niece's views, but with a conscious unrest which recalled with redoubled force the wish with which she had entered the room an hour before.

Nor would it leave her. It followed her to her own elegant apartment, and would not let her rest. There, until a much later hour than usual, sat Aunt Grace, studying what to her of late had been almost a sealed book. She had not, as had Ethel, even made a semblance of reading God's message to men. What wonder, then, that in her were lacking those graces which rendered Florence's Christian life so beautiful even to the sceptical eyes of Dr. Ronelle!

And while Miss Markwell was thus engaged the doctor was driving slowly homeward over a lonely country road from the deathbed of an aged Christian to whose side he had been hastily summoned a few hours before.

He had had this evening another evidence of how peacefully, trustingly, a child of God can die. The reins fell loosely, and the horse took his own way untroubled by his master, who was busy with deep reflections.

Upon one thing he at last decided; there was a reality in religion as professed by some few of his acquaintances.

Florence and Dr. Lyman arose before his mind as examples of those few now; Mrs. Walton and the man whose side he had just quitted as examples of the past.

Yes, he could doubt it no longer; there must be some influence of which he knew not exerting its subtle powers over these—an influence which he had never felt, which, alone there in the darkness, he wondered if he ever should feel. But when it came to this personal issue he paused in his reverie. Was he ready to give up his self-righteousness? Could he relinquish the idea that if there were a heaven to be attained, his sense of justice, his morality, his love of truth and honor, would merit it? Should he cast all these aside and look only to Jesus for salvation? Would he acknowledge himself in any way needing that salvation? In his inmost heart he knew he did, yet his pride came uppermost, forbidding even the knowledge.

Therefore, though he might not deny that of which he had clear evidence in the lives of some, the deaths of others, yet once more he fell back upon the shortcomings of those whose professions would lead us to look for better things, and determined if possible, to find for himself a royal road to heaven.

The next afternoon, shortly after four o'clock, Dr. Lyman called. He had expected to find Florence at home, and was therefore somewhat disappointed that she had promised Nellie Hartford to visit her immediately after school. The child did not seem so strong of late, and Florence often went to lighten her weary hours of pain.

Ethel also was out, on a shopping-expedition with her friend Mrs. Davidson, so that upon Miss Markwell alone devolved the duty of entertaining their pastor.

From utter want of sympathy in the cause of Christ—further than the giving of her money or the management of some dainty part of their fairs and suppers—she had ever found this an irksome task, rendered far more so since her collision with him at the sewing circle some time previous.

One could scarcely blame the aged pastor if he found it in his heart to regret his present visit as inopportune; for, however much he might desire the spiritual welfare of this one of his flock, she had surrounded and armed herself by the supposed pre-eminence given by her dollars and cents that he had ever found the barrier almost impassable. But Dr. Lyman was to be happily disappointed this afternoon. He had to wait but a few minutes in the parlor before Miss Markwell made her appearance.

He was puzzled as well as pleased to notice her cordiality and frankness of welcome, so opposed to what of late he had learned to expect of her; but the puzzle soothed itself out when in speaking of Miss Walton she remarked,

“I have always considered Florence very peculiar in some of her views, and but very recently have come to understand many of her motives. What I fancied to be mere oddities either of nature or education I find are in reality heart-convictions of right and wrong; she certainly has attained to rare Christian graces.”

She has, indeed,” returned the pastor warmly; “yet she has made no further advancement than is the duty—nay, rather the privilege—of every child of God. I regard her as one of the lights set upon a hill, which when men see they give glory to God.”

When next Aunt Grace spoke it was in a most mournful tone:

“Ah me! How far we fall short of what we might enjoy of the fulness of his love the wasted years of my past life but too painfully attest. But I have been narrowly watching the daily consistent life of my niece. Her course has been beset with many temptations. Alas! I have sometimes even been her tempter. But I am sure I can bring to you as my pastor no more joyful tidings than that henceforth I will go hand in hand with her. Together will we struggle onward and upward, serving the same Master in the beauty of his holiness.”

For just one little moment there was no response; the good old pastor must have time to bow his white head while he raised his heart in thankfulness to the Giver of every good and perfect gift for this blessing. Then he spoke:

“This is indeed the most cheerful tidings you could bring me. It is what I have longed and prayed for; nay more, it is what I faithfully hoped and believed