

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

Lesson XIII.—DECEMBER 26.

SELECTED LESSON.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Heavenly City, Rev. xxi. 1-14.
T. The Heavenly City, Rev. xxi. 15-27.
W. The Heavenly City, Rev. xxii. 1-7.
T. Worthy the Lamb, Rev. v. 1-14.
F. The Great Multitude, Rev. vii. 1-17.
S. The Heavenward Way, John xiv. 1-6.
S. The Martyr's Vision, Acts vii. 54-60.

THE HEAVENLY LIFE.

- 1. Where is heaven represented as the dwelling-place of the Father? (Deut. xxvi. 15; Psa. xi. 4; Isa. lxiii. 15; John xiv. 2.)
2. Where is heaven represented as the dwelling-place of the Son? (John iii. 13; vi. 38; Acts iii. 21; Heb. ix. 24.)
3. Where is heaven represented as the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost? (John i. 32; Acts ii. 2; 1 Pet. i. 12.)
4. Where is heaven represented as the dwelling-place of the angels? (1 Kings xxii. 19; Matt. xviii. 10; xxii. 30; Luke xv. 10.)
5. Where is heaven represented as the dwelling-place of the saints? (Ps. lxxiii. 24; Dan. xii. 3; Matt. viii. 11; John xiv. 3.)
6. In what consists the blessedness of the heavenly life?
(1.) Freedom from sin: Psa. xvii. 15; 1 John iii. 2; Rev. xxi. 27.
(2.) Freedom from sorrow: Rev. vii. 16, 17; xxi. 4.
(3.) Fulness of joy: Psa. xvi. 11; Rev. xxii. 5.
(4.) Present with Jesus: Phil. i. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 17.
(5.) Eternal Rewards: Matt. v. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 8.
7. Who may anticipate a share in the heavenly life? (Luke x. 20; Heb. xii. 22, 23.)
8. What is our duty with respect to that life? (Matt. vi. 19, 20; Luke xii. 33.)
9. Am I discharging that duty?

The nine questions above, with their Scripture references, present a profitable exercise upon the theme of the lesson, and sufficiently indicate "how to teach" it.

Less is taught us about heaven, in Scripture, than we sometimes desire to know; but enough is revealed to present an attractive picture, to both the aged and the young.

1. It is a place. It has locality. See John xiv. 2. Also the Scriptures referred to in the first five questions above. Where it is, is a matter of no moment.

2. It is very glorious. It is spoken of as a splendid city (Heb. xiii. 14; Rev. xxi. 10-21); as an incorruptible inheritance (1 Pet. i. 21); as a kingdom (Matt. xxv. 34); with a throne (Rev. iii. 21); as filled with the light of God, and therefore having no need of the sun. (Rev. xxi. 23; xxii. 5.)

3. It is a holy place. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

4. It is a joyful place. (Psa. xvi. 11; Jude 24). This is seen, also, in the fact of the absence of all that here brings sorrow, or pain, or unhappiness. The root of sorrow—sin—cannot enter. See Rev. xxi. 4; vii. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 54; Matt. vi. 20.

5. It is a place of increased knowledge, and spiritual development. (1 Cor. xiii. 10-12; 1 John iii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 18).

6. It is a place of activity. (John v. 17; Rev. vii. 15; xxii. 3). The rest spoken of is not inaction, but freedom from the ills in the train of sin.

7. It has blessed society. The Father, Son, Holy Spirit, angels, saints—as in the first five questions above. Jesus says (John xiv. 3): "Where I am, there ye may be also." The best of all ages will be there. Heaven will be full. (Matt. viii. 11; Rev. vii. 9).

8. It has endless existence. (1 Pet. i. 4; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Rev. iii. 12).

9. It is a place of reward. (Col. iii. 24); yet a gift, freely bestowed (Rom. vi. 23).

10. There are different degrees of glory in heaven. (1 Cor. iii. 12-15; xv. 41; Dan. xii. 3).

11. There is recognition of friends in heaven. (Matt. xvii. 4; Luke xvi. 24).

12. How shall heaven be secured? (John iii. 36; Matt. vi. 20).

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Matthew xvii. 10—Is one of the most striking, and

most touching, of all the sayings of our Lord. Any real disciple of Christ, however insignificant in men's esteem, has an angel in heaven that enjoys prime rank. That angel is near to God. He stands before his immediate face. He always stands there. Such is the care which God takes of the least believer. In such esteem does he hold every soul that is purchased by his Son's redeeming blood. Heaven now is populous with angels that thus represent the living and struggling church of Christ, soul by soul, before his Father. These angels behold Christ's Father's face always. It is a glorious conception! The truth set forth in it is more glorious still. That truth is, that we are unutterably dear to God, if we love and obey his Son. One can scarcely help gathering, too, some hint of hope respecting infant children themselves, as such, from the fact that our Lord thus used them as types of true disciples. It is a slight, perhaps, but it is a very precious suggestion of reason for a blessed assurance.

Daniel xii. 3—Seems rather to refer to the glorious, final state the righteous, than to heaven, as the place of their abode.

6. Psalm xvii. 15—Is variously interpreted. Some think the awaking in it refers to the morning's rousing from sleep. The best way, however, seems to be, to understand it of the resurrection. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" means, "I shall, in the resurrection, find my full contentment of soul in the visible glorious image of God, beheld with my refined and purified spiritual sense."

7. Hebrews xii. 23, 23—Presents some difficulties for exact interpretation. The writer is pointing out the contrast between the privilege enjoyed by New Testament believers, and that enjoyed by believers in Old Testament times. Christians come to Mount Zion instead of to Sinai—to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, a festal host, to the church of the first-born ones enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to spirits of just men that have been perfected. The words, "general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven," do not refer to certain persons conceived of as already in heaven, but only to such persons conceived of as destined for heaven, and having their names now there enrolled. Spirits of just men made perfect, No doubt, means Christians now existing and conscious, in the disembodied state intervening between death and resurrection. For, observe, the ones referred to are spirits; they are spirits of just persons; they are spirits of just persons that have been made perfect. The two expressions together include the whole body of the redeemed—those on earth, and those in heaven. Those who, being vitally one with Christ, through faith, are in him entitled to the rank and estate of "first-born" children of God. Such persons, while they still survive on earth, have their names entered, recorded, enrolled, written, in heaven. If these die before the personal second coming of the Lord, they will, notwithstanding, until that great event, though not yet clothed with their new spiritual bodies, be among the spirits of just persons that have been perfected.

Conceive of heaven the Scriptural way, as a place, as well as a state. Do not speculate about heaven so much as seek to reach heaven.

Trust perfectly and peacefully in the love, and the wisdom, and the power of Him who has gone thither, to prepare a place for you.

Remember that without are the evil of every kind.

Remember that within are they alone who have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Remember that he that heareth is to say, "Come."

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

A tent was the sort of dwelling that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had in Canaan. The Egyptians had large houses. We have learned that God gave Abraham and Isaac riches. Then it was not because they could not afford houses that they lived in tents. When people are on a journey, they do not need to have every thing fixed and settled, like those who stay in one place.

The good men, of whom we have been learning, all looked upon their lives as a mere journey from one land to another. They called themselves pilgrims and strangers on this earth. God had promised to give them Canaan; but he had made them a better promise of a better country, that is, of an heavenly. They kept looking forward to that, all the time, and getting ready for it. But the Egyptians did not believe in God; knew nothing of the promise, did not look forward to, or care for, a heavenly country. So they built cities and houses, which would last a very long time.

Now, if we want to go on this heavenly journey, we must prepare for it.

We must prepare now, or we may not be ready when we are called to go. Jesus, who is there, preparing a home for us, has sent us word just what we shall need. The only thing we need, is, a heart washed clean from sin; and Jesus alone can give us this. Then we must ask him at once to prepare us.

The teacher can dwell on what we are told of the heavenly city, the company to be found there; the blessedness of being free from sin; what we shall wear—white robes, even a clean heart, given by Jesus, also the crown which Jesus promises to those who serve him; what we shall do—worship, praise, sing, serve, rest; whom we shall be like—even Jesus himself. Especially dwell on those who have the right to enter, and those who can never enter.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 103.

A word picture. Where in the Bible is the following scene?

In an apartment of a lowly dwelling sits a blind and aged man. He is alone, and the expression of his countenance tells us that his mind is fully occupied in great but sad thoughts. His eyes are closed to the world around him, but the soul within is full of light.

He sits in a listening attitude, and presently the sound of approaching footsteps is followed by the entrance of a woman, apparently of humble station, bearing some choice delicacies intended as a gift. The blind man at once addresses her in words of warning and reproof, but with heartfelt sympathy; and his words reveal to us that his visitors beneath the lowly guise of a peasant, conceals the lofty rank of a queen, and the beating heart of an anxious and sorrowing mother.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

CHARADES.

141. 1. Add together my first—condensed moisture; and my second—a curve; and you have—a divine sign of promise.

2. Add my first—a piece of money, to my second—heaviness, and you have twenty-four grains.

3. An ornamental tree comprises first—a useful animal; second—a large box; and third—a well preserved fruit.

4. A clerical accomplishment contains first—a writing instrument; second—a boy matured; and third—a water carriage.

142. Make a five word square.

- 1. A harbour.
2. A species of lizard.
3. A man servant.
4. A Syrian town.
5. A town of South Africa.

Answers next week.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 102.

- 1. Rahab.
2. Eli.
3. Balaam.
4. Elijah.
5. Keturah.
6. A dam.
7. Hor.

REBEKAH.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

139. Triangle of words. ATLANTIC TAILORS LIVERY ALEMA NORA TRY IS C

140. Square of words.

- G N A T
N A M E
A M E N
T E N T

Some Dog Stories.

The following remarkable and touching cases of canine intelligence, will interest our boy readers, as well as many of more mature years. They indicate something in the instinct of "man's faithful friend" very much like mental attributes:

"A dog belonging to a United Presbyterian minister killed the fowls while the family were at church and buried them in the garden. The bodies were found. The dog was taken to the garden and immediately confessed his guilt. His master took him to his library, and, having shut the door, began a reprimand after this fashion:—"What a wicked thing you have done in murdering the hens! You are a minister's dog, and should have been an example to other dogs instead of doing such a thing as this. Then, this is the Sabbath day, and the deed is all the worse on account of the day on which it has been done." Thus admonished, the dog was put out of the door and the door shut. Next morning he was found dead. A veterinary surgeon was consulted, and declared that the dog had died of a broken heart."

A few days ago the engineer of a train near Montreal saw a large dog on the track, barking furiously. The engineer whistled, but the dog paid no attention to the noise, and refused to stir. The dog was run over and killed. The engineer saw the animal crouched close to the ground as he was struck by the cow-catcher. A minute later the fireman saw a bit of white muslin fluttering on the locomotive, and he stopped the engine. On going back to where the dog was killed, it was discovered that not only the dog, but a little child had been killed. It was then seen that the dog was standing guard over the child, and had barked to attract the attention of the engineer. The faithful animal had sacrificed his life rather than desert his charge. The child had wandered away from a neighboring house, followed by the dog, and it is supposed that the child laid down and went asleep on the track.

A correspondent of Nature tells the following story as an indication of the possession of intellect in brutes. It was told to the writer by the owner of the dog herself.

"A little black and white King Charles, beloved by its mistress but not by its master, was one day lying on a rug in the drawing-room when the master came in, having just paid its tax. He said: 'I have just paid that dog's tax;' and looking at it with a severe expression, added: 'and he's not worth his tax.' The little dog immediately got up, and with a crestfallen appearance, put its tail between its legs and left the room. It was never seen afterward, nor was it ever heard of again, although inquiries were made at the time in every direction."

One Way.

How would I go to work to keep my children from reading sensational books?

The best way to answer this question is by telling you what I have done. The other evening, coming into the sitting-room, I saw James reading a dime novel—at least I thought it looked like a dime novel. Mother had her sewing; Jennie was working on an afghan; Tommy was making a set of jack straws out of a piece of red cedar "Let's have some reading aloud," said I. "James, you seem to have got hold of an interesting book there; suppose you read it aloud to us." James looked up with a flush on his face.

"I don't believe you would care for this," said he; "it isn't much of a book."

"You're mightily interested in it," said Tommy, "for a book that isn't much of a book."

"Yes, come," said Jennie, let's have some reading aloud. Why not, James?" "Mother wouldn't like this book," said he.

"Why not?" said mother. "Oh, you wouldn't, that's all," said James. "It's just stuff."

"If it isn't worth reading aloud, it isn't worth reading at all," said Jennie.

"That does not follow," said I, "by any means. There are a good many books worth reading that are not worth reading aloud. But if James is too much

interested in his story to put it aside, the rest of us will form a reading circle, and get something that is worth reading aloud."

"Oh I don't care anything about it," said James. "I was just reading to get through the evening. If you have got anything better on hand, let's by all means have it." With that he laid the book by with a shove that sent it half way across the table.

"What shall it be?" said I.

"How would it do to begin a course of history. There's our 'Hume' in the bookcase. I don't believe that any of us ever read it through. How would that do?"

I thought to myself that probably none of us ever would read it through, but I did not say anything. I waited for some one else to respond.

"I've got a jolly book up-stairs," said Tommy.

"What is it?" I asked.

"David Crockett," said Tommy. "I will go and get it." With that, and before any of us could decide whether we wanted it or not, Tommy was off up stairs. He is as quick as a flash in anything. It proved to be one of Mr. John Abbott's Pioneers and Patriots series.

"What is there jolly about it?" said I to Tommy, when he produced it.

"Why, its full of adventure—about a fellow that lived in the wilderness when this country was new, and even Ohio was as wild as an Indian—what do you call it?"

"Reservation," said Jennie.

"Yes, reservation," said Tommy.

"What do you say, James?" said I. "Will you read aloud for us while I go to work on the shoe-box I am making for mother?"

James said he would, and we then and there inaugurated a reading circle. We have kept it up, so far, all winter, James and I taking turns in reading aloud, and the rest going on with their work. Tommy is quite expert with his knife, and he has begged off from the reading to go on with his carpentry. We followed "David Crockett" with "Daniel Boone," and then took up Mrs. Brasse's "Voyage Round the World in the Yacht Sunbeam." We are reading that with an Atlas, and Jennie sometimes looks them up further in the Cyclopædia, and tells us more about them at the next reading.

And I haven't seen anything more of James's dime novel. My way to, keep our boys from the bad literature is to overcome evil with good.

How can I find the time? Well, I believe that he that does not provide for his own family is worse than an infidel. And I think that it is part of my duty to provide my children with good books and good company in reading them. And I won't take so much work on my hands that I cannot do something for my own children.—Christian Union.

There was recently discovered, in a small Bohemian village, the Bible which Luther used in his celebrated translation of the Scriptures into German. The margins are covered with notes in the handwriting of the great reformer. One of the Leipzig professors is said to have offered about £5,000 for the precious volume.

The Queen has conferred the Albert Medal, first class, on Farabine Leedie Tindal, serving in her Majesty's ship Wild Swan, for bravely jumping overboard off the coast of Mozambique, to save a fugitive slave who had been seized by an enormous shark, which had bitten off both his legs. Three other sharks were also in the vicinity.

The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral have started a movement for obtaining a large bell, which shall be worthy of that edifice. The largest bell in the cathedral at present weighs little more than five tons, and the cathedral authorities desire one of ten or twelve tons weight, such as many of the chief cathedrals on the Continent have. York Cathedral has a bell weighing eleven tons, and at Westminster there is one of 13½ tons. A bell of twelve tons weight would cost about £2,500.

A certain gentleman recently lost his wife, and a young miss of six, who came to the funeral, said to his little daughter of about the same age, "Your pa will marry again, won't he?" "Oh yes!" was the reply; "but not until after the funeral."