

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson XIII.—JUNE 27.

SELECTED LESSON.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Baptism of John, Matt. iii. 1-17.
T. Baptism at Pentecost, Acts ii. 37-47.
W. Baptism of the Eunuch, Acts viii. 26-40.
T. Baptism of the Jailor, Acts xvi. 19-34.
F. Buried and Raised, Rom. vi. 1-11.
S. Putting on Christ, Gal. iii. 19-29.
S. The Great Commission, Matt. xxviii. 16-20; Mark xvi. 14-20.

What is the first New Testament account of baptism? (Matt. iii. 1-12). Compare the parallel records, and give a full sketch of the baptism of Jesus. (See Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; Luke iii. 21, 22; John i. 32-34.)

What authority for baptizing is claimed by John in John i. 33.

Had John probably some unauthorized imitators? (Acts xix. 1-5.)

What obligation does baptism impose upon all who receive it? (Rom. vi. 3, 4.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—1. Matthew iii. 1-12. In these verses, John's baptism is spoken of. This rite consisted of an immersion of the entire person of the subject in water—generally, if not always, the water of the Jordan. It was probably a rite new to Jewish ceremonial, the notion of what is called proselyte's baptism being without valid historical evidence in its favor. The question whether John's baptism was properly Christian baptism, is an idle one. That baptism answered God's purposes, until John's ministry was accomplished. There is now one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Our business is to obey the command that comes to us.

2. Mark inscribes his account of John's baptizing, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Luke lets us know that there was question and answer, back and forth, between John and his converts. He also fixes the exact date of his account.

3. The word "baptize" means "immerse," and it means nothing but "immerse." In Jordan, implies immersion, since it is not supposable that the baptizer would take his subject into the river to pour water on him, or to sprinkle it on him. With water, really means in water, as with the Holy Ghost means in the Holy Ghost.

4. Jesus gives as his reason for being baptized, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"; showing thereby that to obey was the important thing, rather than to be baptized.

5. "He hath sent me to baptize with [in] water," is what John says respecting his authority for baptizing. Of course, he meant God.

6. There is no appearance of any authority but Christ's own, for his baptizing. The incompleteness of the account leaves it uncertain, whether those imperfectly instructed disciples had been baptized by John himself, or by some follower of John.

7. Christ, in his parting words before the final ascension, enjoined baptism as an ordinance to be observed till the end of the world. There is no promise here to those who believe, and are not baptized.

8. Acts ii. 38-41. Be baptized, means, "Be immersed." Who were baptized? "They that gladly received his [Peter's] word"; implying that no others were. Acts viii. 36-39.—Vs. 37, in this passage, does not belong in the text. It is plain enough, however, without this verse, that the Eunuch believed, that he was immersed, that Philip would not have immersed him if he had not believed, and that if he had not believed he would not have asked to be immersed. Acts ix. 18.—So closely was baptism associated with the idea of full discipleship, that Paul, after a long fast that made him faint was baptized before he took food. Acts xvi. 15.—We have here a case of what is called "household baptism"; that is, of the baptizing of all the members of a family. We do not even know that Lydia had children. The household was made up, no

doubt, of business assistants. Acts xvi. 31-34.—Another case of household baptism, more fully related. Here it is said to the jailer, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." They preached the word "to all that were in the house." Finally, the jailer "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house"—which settles the present case. 1 Cor. xv. 29.—A very obscure and difficult passage, of hopelessly doubtful interpretation. It does, however, clearly show that being baptized was considered a matter of high importance in Apostolic times. Gal. iii. 27.—This verse also shows that being baptized, was a thing of course with the New Testament believers. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ," meant the entire body of the Galatian Christians. Romans vi. 3, 4.—Paul here draws out an important symbolism contained in baptism. Immersion could mean this—sprinkling could not, pouring could not. 1 Peter iii. 21.—Baptism saves us, in the sense of fulfilling, on our own part, a condition appointed by God, upon the fulfilling of which God saves us. It is not the baptism, it is the obedience in the baptism, that signifies.

A rite, if it is also an ordinance of God, is as binding as a moral command. Jesus, to fulfil all righteousness, was baptized, because baptism was commanded.

It was first upon his act of obedience in baptism, that Jesus had the witness from heaven—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

It is still a command to be baptized, and nobody can possibly obey it for you, since you are the one commanded.

It is as much our duty to induce others to be baptized, as it is to be baptized ourselves since Christ said, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded."

The submersion in baptism means death and burial to sin; and the emersion means resurrection to righteousness. "If thou, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Let Bible Baptism speak for itself—the Word of God is the most powerful teacher. Question on the last command of Jesus. What were the disciples told to do? They were to teach all nations the lessons and commands which they themselves had learned from Jesus. Then something to follow: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

WHAT IS MEANT BY BAPTISM? WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED? HO MAY BE

1. Baptism is being put into water, so as to be covered, and then taken out.

2. We should be baptized because those who love Jesus, wish to do as he did. Because Jesus commands it.

3. Those who believe on Jesus, and feel sure that he has washed away their sins. Children who truly love and serve him, may be baptized as he was.

Stories of Bible baptisms, such as that of Jesus; the three thousand; the eunuch; the jailer, may be told in such a way as will impress the children's minds with the facts that all went down into the water; all (except Jesus) had first repented of their sins and believed on Jesus. No children too small to believe on him are named.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youths' Department.

Bible Enigmas.

No. 77.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

My first for more than twenty years Held the office of high priest; My next filled Israel with fears, Though neither man nor beast. My third is the name of a precious stone On the high priest's breast-plate found; My fourth was an instrument whose tone Gave forth a cheerful sound. My next was a mighty man of old, A prophet of much power; My last was a country rich in gold, Which traded, we're told, with Tyre. The initials down are quickly seen, The name of a fair, beloved queen; The final, a mother whose love was strong, Who watched o'er her children six months long. —N. Baptist.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- No. 57. Make a square of five words:
1. A bay in Maine having 300 islands, 20 miles east of Portland.
2. A village in Cumberland County, N.S. formerly Little Forks.
3. A support.
4. A peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea.
5. A town of N. York 395 miles N. W. of New York city.

Aunt Flora.

No. 58.

Complete these Broken Rhymes with two, the first of which includes the two following ones:

Aunt Flora was a precious --- Her sympathies were ever --- Her cranberry pies were always --- Aunt Flora.

Her homespun dress was neat and --- Her favorite conversation --- Kept her employed like Solomon's --- Aunt Flora.

I do not think she had a --- But everything she did was --- How much I've felt her blessed --- Aunt Flora.

Her heart was sweet and warm as --- And you would know from any --- Among the wise she was not --- Aunt Flora.

—Harper's Young People.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 76.

- 1. G ath,
2. O bed,
3. D agon,
4. I srael,
5. S amson,
6. L azarus,
7. O live,
8. V erily,
9. E noch.

GOD IS LOVE, is the source of all love.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 56. Square of words.

N I L E
I R I S
L I M A
E S A U

Select Serial.

Florence Walton,

OR,

A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MOKEAN.

CHAPTER XVII.—DR. RONSELLE'S REFUSAL. Presently Lottie took from her pocket a small piece of crumpled paper.

"I found something so beautiful this afternoon in an old paper; please may I read it to you?"

"Yes, dear."

And this is what she read:

"There once lived an old lady whom it pleased God greatly to afflict. One after another, she followed to the grave her husband and all her children; she met with financial losses, sickness overtook her, and friends became fewer, until at last she found herself old, alone, and poor. Yet in all this time, though a professed Christian, she had not learned to look upon God's chastening rod as otherwise than evil; she could not look up with confidence and say, 'It is my Father; let him do as seemeth him best.' Therefore often and bitterly did she complain.

"One night in the midst of her murmurings she fell asleep and dreamed. She thought she was in a foreign land, surrounded by strange scenes and faces but all the inhabitants of the country with one accord gave reverence to their king. In her travels through this country she encountered two men engaged in grinding down a diamond. She paused to look at them at work, and as they kept on grinding the precious dust falling at their feet, 'Sirs, why this waste?' she cried.

"They replied: 'This diamond is for the crown of our glorious king. There is still one flaw in it; to make it fit for that crown we must grind that last flaw away.'

"The woman awoke and thought upon her dream. 'I see, I see!' she cried. 'I am that diamond, but I have many flaws that must be ground out before I can be fitted to sparkle in the diadem of my King. I will no longer murmur at God's providences, but take them as being sent in love from the hand of my Father, who knows what each of his children requires to best prepare them for his home on high.'

Lottie laid aside the paper and looked at Florence in silence. Her eyes were closed: one might almost have thought she slept, but for two teardrops which forced themselves beneath the fringed lids. Presently she looked up:

"That is beautiful, Lottie." "I think so answered the child; "and it seemed to me all the more beautiful because Miss Markwell had just been scolding me because I didn't walk quick enough, though I was so tired; and I almost thought God was unkind to make her so rich and me so poor. But I don't think so now; it is all right."

Florence tenderly stroked the hand which lay in hers. So this little one had her struggles and trials as well as herself, and how cheerfully, trustingly, she bore them! Florence looked from her own heart upward to the Source of all strength, and took courage.

In the meantime Ethel, culling a few stray autumn leaves near the bower, yet entirely concealed from it by evergreens, had overheard most of what passed between the doctor and her cousin. As soon as they had gone, so as to render it safe to leave the place of concealment without being detected, she hastened to her aunt.

"Aunt Grace, what do you suppose that poor, misguided niece of yours has done now?" she cried as soon as the door was closed.

Aunt Grace dropped her work in surprise as she made answer:

"I am sure I could not guess. But judging from your manner, it must be something more serious than usual."

"Yes, it is. I have no patience with her at all. She has actually refused an offer of marriage from Dr. Ronnelle."

"Impossible." "I should say the same had I not heard it myself; but there can be no mistake—she was very decided."

"She must be coquetting; I cannot think her so blind to her own interests."

"Coquetting?" and Ethel laughed lightly. "Really, auntie, you don't understand her at all. She hasn't spirit enough to think of such a thing."

"What can be the reason then?" Miss Markwell really looked troubled about the matter.

"She told him her reason; it is the same I mentioned to you some time again—he is not a church-member. I really suppose she thinks he isn't good enough for her."

Aunt Grace returned from the speculation as to the "whys and wherefores" of the question which seemed so inexplicable with a sudden shock. She had dropped the inevitable fancy zephyr work she had taken up a moment before, and leaning forward asked eagerly, "You are not in earnest?"

"Never was more so." "Antie Grace's fingers moved with more than their usual rapidity for the next few seconds, while she thought of what was best to do. Presently she said,

"I had quite made up my mind never again to interfere with any of Florence's religious views, but this is positively too absurd; it is utter nonsense. Ethel, send Florence immediately to me; I cannot see her wreck all her own happiness so wilfully? Does she not know that Dr. Ronnelle is wealthy? And if he is not a member of any church, he is yet a rarely moral young man—such as any girl should be proud to accept as her lover. I must see her at once, or it may be too late to undo the mischief she has already done."

And thus it was that, just as Florence was sinking into happy unconsciousness under the soothing influences of Lottie's cool hand bathing the heated brow, she was ruthlessly awakened by the entrance of Ethel and bidden to appear before her aunt, from whom at this time she could not help feeling an instinctive repulsion.

It is not necessary, my dear reader, to dwell upon in this interview. You are already sufficiently acquainted with the mind of each to understand what its nature would most likely be. Suffice it to say that, in that period of rest and quiet in which she had time to compare her life with others, and then to look upward to her Father's love, Florence had gained strength for that which was before her, while her aunt in her decision was angry, almost violent, in her attempt to persuade her niece of her error.

The close of this interview to all out-

ward appearances left both aunt and niece just where they stood in the beginning, yet could we look into the hearts of each we should find Florence more decided than ever before that she had done right, while Aunt Grace was forced to admit in her own musings,

"She is a perfect marvel to me; I cannot understand it at all. I wonder why I never found such requirements in religion? Can it be because she is more truly in earnest than I? Yet she is seldom unhappy. I would I were more like her."

CHAPTER XVII.—AUNT GRACE'S CHANGE. "I would I were more like Florence." Again and again the thought came back to Miss Markwell's mind, forming itself into an unrestful sigh which she would fain repress.

It haunted her in the midst of the merry group which gathered in her parlors the next afternoon to laugh away the holy hours of the Lord's Day; it seemed to whisper in her ear, causing their gay voices to sound afar off and indistinct. She grew restless under its influence, and in that restlessness she left the callers to the entertainment of Ethel, while she excused herself and went up to Florence's room.

She sank down opposite the young girl, forgetting for perhaps the first time since the little mourning clad teacher had come beneath her roof that she was the rich Miss Markwell and Florence her poor niece who daily toiled for her living—forgetting all the differences which wealth and conventionality might place between them, with only that one wish still ringing through her mind, growing stronger yet as she looked into the calm, sweet face, which gave no token of the violent conflict within except by the pallor of the cheeks, and later, when the subject was spoken of, by a just perceptible tremor of the thin lips.

"You are quite firm in your decision?" Auntie Grace asked after a little.

"Miss Markwell leaned forward and took one of her niece's hands in her own."

"Florence," she said gently, and with more real regard than was actually evinced in her tone and manner, "you love Dr. Ronnelle; how can you see it to be your duty to disregard your feelings so entirely? Would it, for instance, be Ethel's duty to refuse Clifford for the same reason.

"Dear Aunt Grace, I do not wish to dictate to another, but for myself I have already proved that I am not strong enough to withstand temptation. Already I have gone to places where I should never have gone but to please him; I have spent the Lord's Day in a manner to which I cannot reconcile my conscience, because he wished it. Were he my husband, of course his influence would be still greater. Had I proved myself strong, able to say, 'No,' and stand by it, even though he plead for its repeal, and had he then asked the question he now has, my answer might have been different; I might then have hoped to influence him for the right—to have led him to Jesus. As it is, I can never hope for such an influence. Do not urge me further."

"Perhaps you are right, but after all it seems a great sacrifice," remarked Miss Markwell.

Florence smiled a quiet, happy smile which seemed to carry joy with it:

"Can anything be too great a sacrifice to render unto him who died for us? Besides, he has already rewarded me in that peace which the world cannot give, neither take away; here it is in my heart, testifying that I have done my duty," she said.

Aunt Grace sighed: "Do you think you will never regret this step, Florence?"

For one moment a shadow flitted over the young face. Aunt Grace noticed it, and resumed quickly: "Ah, I see you regret it already. Florence, my dear child, let me persuade you that you are doing wrong in all this."

"Nay, dear aunt, do not try; I would not be persuaded if I could. Some times, indeed, I feel sorely tempted—sometimes a longing for that earthly love which I may perhaps never know comes to me with all its force, almost winning the victory. But, after all, I know that all this and much more will Christ make up to me. I would not yield the consciousness of having done right for any earthly love."