

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—AUGUST 28.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

Exodus xx. 1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 3-11.

The journeys of Israel are after the last lesson traced southwardly, until in the third month after leaving Egypt they came into the wilderness of Sinai, (Ex. xvii. 1-16; xviii. 1-27; xix. 1). Preparations were then made for the giving of the law (Ex. xix. 1-15) which was delivered under most impressive surroundings. (Ex. xix. 16-25). The words of the moral law compose this and the following lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."—Matthew xxii. 37, 38.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Commandments, Exodus xx. 1-11.
T. Israel before Sinai, Exodus xix. 1-25.
W. Summary of the Law, Matt. xxii. 34-40.
T. Vanity of Idols, Isa. xliv. 6-20.
F. Honoring the Sabbath, Neh. xiii. 15-22.
S. God's Perfect Law, Psa. xix. 1-14.
S. Laws of the Redeemed Nation, Exodus xx. 1-11.

LAWS OF THE REDEEMED NATION.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Lawgiver, Vss. 1, 2. II. The Laws, Vss. 3-11.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 1, 2.—Who spoke the words of this law? By what name did he introduce himself? What is here meant by "Lord"? What by God?

II. Vss. 3-11.—Repeat the first commandment. What other gods have men put before the true God? Do we have other gods?

Repeat the second commandment. What is a "graven image"? What is meant by a "jealous God"?

Repeat the third commandment. What is it to take God's name in vain? How does God hold those who break this command?

Repeat the fourth commandment. What is meant by "Sabbath"? Whose is the seventh day? What reason for rest on this day is given? What two things has the Lord done for the Sabbath-day? What benefits may be expected from observing it? Which day of the week is the Jewish Sabbath? Which is the Christian's rest-day? Why is this difference?

How did Jesus declare his friends should be known? Read John xv. 10.

Having provided Israel with bread for their journey, as taught in the last lesson, God also gave them water, from "the rock in Horeb," (xvii. 6); and thus freely supplied, without effort of their own, they were called upon to encounter Amalek in battle, over whom they gained the victory. They pursued their course in a south-easterly direction, and, "in the third month," came to the "wilderness of Sinai" (xix. 1) and "camped before the mount." Then "Moses went up unto God" in the mountain, and received instructions for Israel, that they were to sanctify themselves "to-day and to-morrow," washing their clothes, and preparing "against the third day," when the Lord would "come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." Bounds were set about the mountain, that neither human being nor beast should touch it; and on the third day, "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people trembled." Travelers speak of a plain, in connection with one of the peaks of Sinai, as a suitable spot for the assembling of many thousands of people, where the whole of Israel could have found ample room. Not only the people, but the mountain, trembled (xix. 18); and, with such awe-inspiring surroundings, God gave the people his Law.

NOTES.—I. The One God, (Vs. 1-3.)

Verses 1.—The giving of the Law was attended with circumstances of the most appalling solemnity. God, himself, appeared on the scene, and spake. This was in a different sense from that in which he afterwards spoke to the people by the mouths of the prophets. It is

not necessary to conceive of his taking bodily form and organs for this purpose; as, without them, he could produce articulate sounds for the ear. He spoke with a voice like the thunder, and all the people heard, (vs. 18). Angels, too, had part in this promulgation, (Deut. xxxiii. 2, Acts vii. 53; Heb. ii. 2). God not only spoke these words, but also "wrote them in two tables of stone" (Deut. v. 22), and delivered them unto Moses. All these words. Called the "Ten Words," or Decalogue; marked by wonderful simplicity and brevity, in sharp contrast to the indefiniteness and verbiage of human laws. The Moral Law, containing the fundamental principles of religion and morality, and giving the sum of man's duties to God, and to his fellow-man.

Verses 2.—Shows the obligation to keep this law. He who commands is Jehovah,—the Self-existent, the Creator, and has a right to command. "He is thy God," the Redeemer who brought his people out of the house of bondage." This is the great reason upon which God dwells.

Verses 3.—The first commandment declares that there is but one God. It is opposed to the polytheism of Egypt, and other nations. It sweeps away the worship of natural objects, such as the stars, beasts, etc., to which divine honors were paid in Egypt. It not only forbids the worship of false gods, but, by a necessary inference, commands the worship of the true God.

II. The Worship of God, (Vs. 4-6).

Verses 4.—The first commandment tells us whom to worship; the second reveals the manner of worshipping him. The prohibition includes the making of every kind of image or picture (likeness refers to paintings, as well as to sculpture) for the purpose of worship. In heaven above, etc. "The Egyptians worshiped the heavenly host, and birds; bulls, dogs, cats, and rats, and crocodiles and serpents.

Verses 5.—Thou shalt not bow down. Ritualistic ceremonies are included in this condemnation. A jealous God, refers to the intensity of his feeling against idolatry. This great sin excites his just indignation. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. A reason for their shunning idolatry is their love for their children, upon whom, by the law of family relation, the curse of their parents' iniquities falls. He who follows evil ways, or false doctrines, entails moral, sometimes physical, calamities upon his children. A godless father is apt to have a godless family, and even through many generations, the wickedness of an ancestor bears its evil fruit.

Verses 6.—God visits iniquity unto the third and fourth generation; but he shows mercy unto thousands—that is, thousands of generations. Far more congenial to his nature, who is love, is the exercise of mercy than of wrath.

III. The Name of God, (Vs. 7).

The name of God stands for his nature, and for himself. To take the name of God in vain, is to trifle with him whom it represents. This applies to all use of the name of God in a light, profane, and irreverent manner. All jesting about sacred things; all use of Bible phrases for the purpose of pointing a joke; irreverence in the house of God, and jocose references to the ordinances of Christ. The tendency of the day to turn every thing into a jest, receives here a severe rebuke. He will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. The irreverent spirit undermines faith in holy things. If God and his religion are spoken of lightly, they take no deep hold upon the heart.

IV. The Sabbath, (Vs. 8-11).

Verses 8.—The fourth commandment sets apart a seventh portion of our time for rest and worship. The word Remember, apparently (though not necessarily), implies a reference to the Sabbath, as already instituted. See Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xvi. 22-30. The Sabbath-day. The rest day, on which God rested from all his work. Holy. Something more than abstinence from secular work is implied. There is no holiness in idleness, rather than in labor. Hence, the fitness of religious worship and active beneficence upon that day. The word holy sets it apart to religious uses.

Verses 9-11.—Six days shalt thou labor. Six days are sufficient to secure bread for seven. The nature, and physical and spiritual well-being of man, require the cessation of one day in the

week from usual toils. The prohibition of secular employment upon the Sabbath, is specific and positive, the household being commanded to restrain, not only himself, but all under his roof.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

God spoke. If God should speak to us here in our Sunday-school room, what would we do?

Many, many years ago, God did speak so that some men and women and little boys and girls heard his voice. They were the same people whom God had brought out of Egypt, the same who walked through the Red Sea and to whom God sent manna. What were they called? Who was their leader?

After the children of Israel had been out of Egypt about three months, the pillar of cloud led them to a place called Sinai. There were many mountains in this place and the cloud rested upon one of them. "There Israel camped before the mount." Simplify the account in ch. xix. 3-8; then question as follows: Who called Moses? Where was God? &c. The Lord told Moses that in three days he would come in a thick cloud and speak to the people. Read vs. 10-13. Read vs. 16-18.

Even the little ones can memorize the following selections:

- 1. I am the Lord thy God. . . Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: 4. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

We have been learning four of God's commandments. What did the people say when Moses asked them if they would obey God's voice? "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." That is what God wants each of us to say.

If we love God with all our hearts, how many of his commandments will we try to obey.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youths' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 134.

Form an acrostic of the answers to the following questions, and then give the names of the earliest mentioned "priest of the most High God."

- 1. Who lived 969 years?
2. Who was the first man who went to heaven without dying?
3. What woman of Philippi was converted under Paul's ministry?
4. Who was the first Gentile convert under the preaching of Peter?
5. Who was the wicked king who caused James to be killed, and because it pleased the Jews, imprisoned Peter?
6. Which was the prophet who, by way of eminence, is called the evangelical prophet (as his name indicates), "The Salvation of Jehovah"?
7, 8. A priest of the family of Abia, with his wife, of whom it is recorded, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."
9. Which of the prophetic writers gives the most extraordinary and comprehensive predictions relating to the last days, making his prophecy and John's revelation illustrative of each other?
10. Under whose name is the advent of John the Baptist prophesied by Malachi?
11. The High Priest of the Jews at the time of our Saviour's trial.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 221. Who made a chariot of the wood of Lebanon, the pillars of silver, the bottom of gold, the covering of purple?
222. Who turned the house of the Lord, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem?
223. Who carried away captive four thousand six hundred Jews?
224. Who was a watchman unto the house of Israel?
225. Where are coats first mentioned in the Bible?
226. Where was organ mentioned in the Bible?
227. Where in the Bible is it said that an angel opened doors?
228. Who was the wife of Lapidoth, and where did she dwell?
229. Who slew 70 brothers upon one stone?
230. Where did David ask that his tears might be put?
231. To whom did King Ahasuerus give a ring?
232. Form a diamond of the following words,—the central word—both horizon-

tal and perpendicular—a famous old city:

- 1. The head of Jonah.
2. Half a brother's son.
3. Four grains.
4. Without art.
5. The city of peace.
6. A comparison.
7. That which agrees.
8. A place of shelter.
9. The head of a mountain.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 133.

- 1. I shbosheth
2. S aul.
3. N athan.
4. O bed.
5. T imothy.
6. E unice.
7. A bednego.
8. S hadrach.
9. I ssacher.
10. L evi.
11. Y oke.

"IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED."

1 Cor. xiii. 5.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 219. NUMERICAL ANAGRAMS. 1. Foxes. 2. Mouse. 3. Palm. 4. Palm. 5. Lamps. 6. Chicago. 7. Leopard. 8. Victoria. 9. Babylon.
220. 2 Kings xix, and Isaiah xvii.

Lead On.

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead thou me on;

The night is dark, and I am far from home;

Lead thou me on,

Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see

The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor asked that thou

Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path, but now

Lead thou me on.

I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long thy power has blessed me, sure it still

Will lead me on

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent

The night is gone,

And with the dawn these angel faces

Smile!

That I have loved long since, and lost

Awfully!

NEWMAN.

"Letters from Heathen Lands."

Rev. S. F. Smith, D. D., has continued writing his interesting account of his visit to the missionaries in India; the following therefrom will be exceedingly gratifying to many of our readers:

ONGOLE—CHARACTER OF THE AUDIENCE.

Many of the audiences were specially interesting. The Christians gave proof of the civilizing influence of Christianity, in their thoughtful and happy faces, their neat dresses and their shining hair, contrasting most favorably with the uncleanly waist-cloths and frowzy heads of the heathen. Some in the audience had been saved from the famine, and their frames were still weak and shrivelled. A few, and only a few, were bowed with age; for the heathen, apparently, die before their three-score years and ten, though there are exceptions. One morning an old man in the congregation with wet eyes said the coming of the strangers from America was "like the coming of God." He charged me to thank every Christian in America for sending the gospel to his people, and asked me to beg them to send many more, saying there was room enough and work for all. Some of the older people bowed their heads on my hands, as if they would kiss my hands in excessive reverence and affection. One morning a man of middle age stood up before me, and said he had only believed a little while, about three years, but that I had long known Christ. He asked whether in my experience the gospel held out, a continued source of comfort and joy. Of course I rejoiced to tell him that it did.

VISIT TO RAMAPATAM.

My experience in the Telugu mission would have been incomplete without a

visit to Ramapatam, the seat of the Theological seminary, from which, it is hoped, in coming years, pastors may be prepared to go forth to fold and feed these multitudes of the sheep and lambs of the great Shepherd's flock. Its situation is very beautiful, being on the edge of the sea, whose blue waters, less than a mile distant, are in full view from the veranda of the mission house. Rev. Mr. Timpany, now of the Canadian mission at Cocanada, resided here for a season, in charge of the Theological Seminary, which afterwards passed into the hands of Rev. Mr. Williams, of the missionary Union. During the absence of the latter in America, his place is most efficiently supplied by the Rev. Mr. Boggs.

We arrived at Ramapatam at nine o'clock in the evening, in a carriage from Alloor, drawn, as is often the custom in India, by five coolies,—two in front and three behind. When we drew near the house, a number of the students of the Seminary, aware of our approach, promptly displaced the coolies, and, taking possession of the carriage, as if it had no weight, joyfully hurried it forward, and landed us at the mission home, where we received the usual cordial and most graceful welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Boggs. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, a few of the Christian young men were introduced to us the same evening.

THE SEMINARY STUDENTS.

There are full three hundred persons, great and small, on the premises. The students in the Seminary number nearly two hundred. Sixty or more women are under instruction, and the children who are old enough are also taught.

We saw them practising the alphabet with their fingers, in the sand, instead of slate and pencil, singing aloud and monotonously the combinations of the letters, alternately writing, changing, adding and obliterating, until their infant memories had successfully mastered the elements, and they were prepared for more advanced lessons. Some of the women study in the same classes with their husbands. The larger proportion of all the students are from the Ongole field, and there, in those broad harvests, the sheaves are waiting for them to come and put in the sickle and reap. The instruction given by Mr. Boggs is accurate and thorough, and he is greatly respected and loved by the young men. His incomparable wife is a true missionary, and has left an infant child beyond the broad ocean, in order to devote all her energies to the demands of the mission, taking them all to her heart, rejoicing in their successes, patient with their dullness, skillful to stimulate them to the highest endeavor, and nobly exhibiting to them what a true Christian woman can do and be. I was present one day at a recitation of the Senior class, composed of forty-seven young men. They had recently studied the epistles to the Romans and Ephesians. I was invited to question them freely as to their knowledge of these epistles. It occurred to me to ask if any member of the class could give me at once the drift of each of the sixteen chapters of the Epistles to the Romans. I did not suppose they could do it. But one of them did it without hesitation. I asked them which was their favorite chapter in the epistle. They all answered, with one voice, "The eighth." "Why?" "Because it tells of a full, a free and eternal salvation."

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A Sensual Ghost.

"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Dead while she liveth! What a kind of ghostliness and horror the words suggest! We shudder and the knees smite together at the apparition of a ghost. And what is a ghost? A soul bereft of its body which is death. But is the death any less real when the body has been bereft of its soul; when the flesh has slowly consumed the spirit—drunk it up through its lusts and passions—till all traces of spiritual light and glory have gone out of the face, leaving only a body of dull, sodden, soulless flesh? You will not see a ghost; but you will see many such apparitions as this moving through our streets. And a spiritual man will have more shinking from them than from the bloodless ghost. I do not say you must fly from such an one, and withhold your touch from the clammy, repulsive hand; but I say you should beseech God every day upon your knees to spare you from becoming such an one,—dead while you live.—From Grace and Glory, by Rev. A. J. Gordon.