The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, November 2nd, 1879.—The Perfect Pattern.—1 Peter ii. 19–25.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 19-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."—1 Peter ii. 22.

DAILY READING.—Monday, 1 Peter i. Tuesday, 1 Pet. ii. Wednesday, 1 Pet. iii. Thursday, 1 Pet. iv. Friday, 1 Pet. v. Saturday, 1 Pet. vi; 2 Pet. i. Sunday, 2 Pet. ii-iii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Suffering for conscience toward God. Vss. 19, 20. II. Example of Christ. Vss. 21-25.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Peter's first religious teacher? Who was his second? With what other two disciples had he peculiar honor? By what was he often humbled?

I. Vss. 19, 20.—What suffering is praiseworthy?

II. Vss. 21-25.—Why are *Christians* in particular called to patient endurance? With whom have they professed to be one? What did Paul desire to know? Phil. iii. 10. What shall follow if we suffer with Christ? 2 Tim. iii. 12. What should be every man's study? Acts xxiv. 16. Why does conscious innocence make a man patient in suffering? Why should not a Christian life be surprised at persecutions? John xv. 20. Whose example should ever be our stay? Heb. xii. 3, 4. What then should we ever carry about? 2 Cor. iv. 10. How long will suffering last? 2 Cor. iv. 16-18.

Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, had been trained, first by John the Baptist, then by our Lord, for the great work of his life. His character was elevated by special privileges, and chastened by humiliation on account of personal weakness. We saw a year or two ago in our studies the prominent part Peter took in the early founding of the apostolic church as a recognized leader and speaker. The primacy of Peter, however, as the Roman Catholic Church insists upon it, was never *accorded to him by his Master, never claimed by himself, never admitted by the early Christians.* Peter labored long and faithfully in Palestine, baptizing the first converts and opening the gates of the church to the Gentiles. Though not of Paul's deep doctrinal wisdom, Peter was a wise master-builder. In his own beautiful figure he bore testimony to the chief corner-stone (1 Peter ii. 6), and late in life, according to his Lord's prophecy (John xxi. 18, 19), was crucified—tradition says, with his head downward—in the reign of Nero, about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, A. D. 64-68.

The heads of doctrine contained in the Epistles of Peter are many, but the main that are most insisted upon are these three: *faith, obedience, and patience—to establish in believing, to direct in doing, and to comfort in suffering.*

The subject of this lesson is the example of Christ.

Notice (1.) *To whom* is the example of Christ here especially commended? To Christian servants (vs. 18). To rulers (vss. 13-17.) To masters (vss. 18-25), of wives to husbands (iii. 1-6.)

(2.) *As to what* is his example here presented? Patient endurance of undeserved suffering.

(3.) Christ was innocent (vs. 22), yet suffered in patient silence, committing himself to God (vs. 23); for us (vs. 24); wandering sheep who needed a Saviour to bring us back (vs. 25).

Two great lessons: I. Christians ought to imitate Christ in all things (vs. 20).

II. Christians must expect to suffer wrong; and when "called" to do so (vs. 21) must suffer patiently.

EXPOSITION.— *Verses* 19, 20.— *Verse* 19.—*For this is thankworthy.*—See the connection with verse 18. Slaves, especially those whose masters were cruel, had much to suffer and little to hope for as respects this world. "*This*" refers to the words which follow, viz.: "*if a man for*," etc., and not to the preceding verse. "*Thankworthy.* Comp. Acts xxv. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 3; v. 4). *If a man* (any one) *for conscience toward God endure grief* (griefs), *suffering wrongfully* (unjustly). Here is implied a contrast between the earthly master of a slave and God the Supreme Sovereign of all. "*Conscience toward God*" is a recognition of God's sovereignty and law as above all other laws, and directing us in all possible relations. He sometimes requires us to endure what he does not justify others in inflicting. Rom. xii. 19. Obligation to submit arises from *God's* authority which may express *his* justice and even compassion in requiring us to submit to injustice from the hands of our fellow-men.

Verse 20.—*For what glory is it*, etc., "*What glory*" is here, more exactly, *what sort of fame*, the fame or reputation being supposed to correspond to the action occasioning it. The implication is not, that one would not do well to merit even such a report *in case he had sinned*, but that this would be something falling quite below the Christian requirement. Here the thought is of sin and punishment as between man and man; that is, human government. *To buffett* is to strike or beat with the fist and indicates a *primitive* mode of punishing, not yet wholly obsolete. *But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it* (if doing good and suffering), etc. "*To do well*" is not simply to keep from breaking the law but to be a benefactor, to do good. See Mark iii. 3; Luke vi. 9, 35; and compare Rom. v. 17. Such benefaction is the *life business* of a Christian; it is a Christian life in its aim and endeavor. *This is acceptable with God.* Another reading, well supported, has "*for* this is acceptable."

Verses 21-25.—*Verse* 21.—*For even hereunto were ye called.* Exactly, *for unto this ye were called.* This "*for*" is intended to connect what follows with the three preceding verses as a more affecting and impressive explanation of his seemingly hard requirements as there given. The *call* may here include both the proclamation of the gospel and the efficacious work of the Spirit in securing obedience. The idea was not that men were called to such suffering as in itself an *end*, but as an experience *incidental* to salvation, and *very likely* to befall the Christian in this world. *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us* (you) *an example*, etc. "Christ *also*," he as well as we; we not without him, as he not without us. The word "*because*" here assumes the great truth that our call is to be "in Christ," to find "in him" our *life*, "ye in me and I in you." That he lived not for himself but for others is expressed in the words "*for us.*" "He went about doing good," was even "made flesh" in order to bless and save us, the lost; "while we were yet enemies Christ died for us." The word rightly rendered "example" designates a copy for writing set by a teacher for his pupil; to follow his steps is not necessarily to conform to his outward conduct, nor can it be to accomplish his atoning work. In both these respects his position was unique and never to be repeated. But we imitate him in taking *our* position and doing *our* work in *his spirit*, acting upon his principles with his life dwelling in us.

Verse 22.—*Who did no sin*, etc.—This asserts only the absence of sin; that is, his *innocence*, but it implies the presence of a positive goodness, that is, his *holiness.* Hence he gave no occasion for the infliction of evil upon him in the way of punishment. Compare i. 19; Isaiah liii. 9; John viii. 46; Heb. vii. 26. There was clearly made upon the minds of the sacred writers the abiding impression that herein Jesus stood quite apart from all other men.

Verse 23.—*Who, when he was reviled*, etc.—This has its first and direct reference to Christ's conduct when undergoing the mock trial which ended in the crucifixion. "He *endured*" (that is, patiently, the same word as in verse 20, last clause,) the contradition of sinners against himself. See Heb. xii. 3. *But committed himself*, etc. To the Father. See Matt. xxvi 52-54; John xii. 47-50. This statement must be brought into connection with those in which Christ says he "came not to do his own will but the Father's;" also that his work and his words are not his own but such as are given him by the Father.

Verse 24.—*Who his own self bare our sins*, etc. This shows what Christ did for us which we cannot do for ourselves or each other, and which, therefore, we can imitate only in respect to the spirit with which it was performed. See above on verse 21. Compare Col. i. 24. This verse takes up and reaffirms the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice as taught in Isa. liii. *To bear sin*, in both the Old Testament and New, means to bear its penalty. Christ's sufferings were in some true sense in place of our penalty for our own sins, and hence a substitute for that penalty. Whatever philosophy or explanation of the fact one may give this is the fact. *By whose stripes*, etc. The healing includes the removal of both the sin and the consequent condemnation—regeneration and justification.

Verse 25.—*For ye were*, etc.—We should forgive and treat kindly others because God forgave us. To turn or return is to "be converted." "*Bishop*" means overseer.

—Abridged from the *Baptist Teacher.*

SUNDAY, November 9th, 1879.—The Perfect Saviour.—1 John i. 1-10.

"GOLDEN TEXT.—The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 John i. 7.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

We need a perfect pattern to copy our life by, there never was but one such perfect life that could be a pattern.

The lesson on "the mind of Christ," showed it is not enough to have a pattern for our work, but that pattern must be followed exactly, and in order to do this, we must look closely, and all the time at our copy.

We can see Jesus *in the Bible.*

Teach the difference between being punished when we have really done wrong, and being patient when suffering for wrong done *to* us. Children who would not dare to *speak* a lie, often *act* one. Illustrate this. Jesus has made a straight path to the gate of heaven, and left us his footsteps, so that we could see the way.

He not only made this path to the gate, but he opened the gate of heaven by suffering for us. Explain these words, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 43.

LORD OF LORDS.

1. L—eprosy.
2. O—mri.
3. R—aamah.
4. D—avid.

5. O—live.
6. F—aith.

7. L—azarus.
8. O—badiah.
9. R—ahat.
10. D—aniel.
11. S—aul.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

3. Abimelech. Judges ix 5.
4. Haran, the eldest son of Terah, and father of Lot, of whom Moses records that he "died before his father." In the days when the lives were longer the death of a son before his father was an event of unusual importance. Genesis xi. 28.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 44.

AN ALPHABET OF SCENES AND PLACES IN THE LIFE OF SAINT PAUL.

A—where he preached the unknown God, our Lord.
B—where they nobly searched God's holy word.
C—where he toiled his daily bread to win.
D—where with blinded eyes he mourned his sin.
E—where the mob raved as of sense bereft.
F—the safe harbour which the sailors left.
G—the young church who loved the apostle well,
But through false teachers from his doctrine fell.
H—was Paul's kinsman or Paul's evidence.
I—where he preached until they drove him thence.
J—where he watched the martyr Stephen die.
K—those he fondly mourned continually.
L—where the crowd to worship him began,
And then at night they stoned him! Such is man!
M—where the apostle, just escaped to land,
On the sick sire of Publius laid his hand.
N—where he landed with his message high
In answer to the Macedonian cry.
O—the young slave whom Paul from bondage freed,
A brother, not a slave, beloved indeed.
P—held the dungeon where the apostle lay.
An earthquake set him free ere dawn of day.
Q—in Paul's letter, greets the saints at Rome.
R—the proud city whence God called him home.
S—where with friends one day he gladly staid.
T—where he knelt upon the shore and prayed.
U—was his helper—Paul gives us his name.
V—was the beast which came out of the flame.
W—from which in a basket let down,
Safe the apostle escaped from the town.
X—is the cross which he preached until death.
Y—was Timotheus his son in the faith.
Z—was still burning in Pauls aged heart
Willing to tarry, he longed to depart.

S. K. G.

—*Woman's Work.*

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

5. Where do we read of embroidery in the Bible?
6. Which of the epistles begins without salutation, and ends without benediction?

Youths' Department.

A Modern Fairy.

BY EMMA L. PLYMPTON.

From the doorway of a New England farm-house, over which figured dates much older than themselves, three sisters stood watching an old stage-coach as it slowly pursued its wonted route along the turnpike leading to the nearest city.

"I am glad that papa and mamma are at last started on their journey," said Hepsy, with a suppressed sigh, "for they need the change."

"And *I* think it was uncommonly shabby of them to leave us with all the work to do, and not a servant on the place but one old farm-hand," interrupted Elsie, shutting the door with a slam, and leading the way into the kitchen.

Bell followed, and cuddling up in a corner of the deep window-sill, looked discontentedly about the room, where the whitewash was scaling off the walls. "For my part," she began, petulantly, "I would like to see a bit of the world myself. It is a weary life we have of it, year in and year out, on the old farm, with no prospect of anything better."

At this moment a loud knock was heard at the front door. It was winter, and so few people broke upon the solitude of the farm that this signal of an arrival caused a flutter among the girls. Hepsy went to answer the summons, but before she succeeded in opening, the knocking was repeated at the kitchen entrance.

"Come in," shouted Bell, from her seat.

At this permission there tripped into the room a modest little figure in a waterproof suit, holding a small travelling-bag in her hand.

"How do you do? I am Cousin Bertha, from the West," said the girl, in a frank voice, as if the announcement was sure to give pleasure.

Bell hopped down from her perch and stared fixedly at the stranger, as much as to say, "Who under the sun is Cousin Bertha?" while Elsie advanced slowly, taking time to observe that there was not so much as a feather on the young girl's round hat, or a single ring adorning the slender fingers stretched out to meet her own.

"Mother isn't at home, and we haven't any servant," she remarked, bluntly. "If you had dropped us a line, we might have been ready for you," and Elsie gave a distressed look about her, which was reflected on the pleasant face of her guest.

It did not escape Hepsy's bright eyes, and her warm little heart was shocked at so inhospitable a reception. Rushing forward, she grasped her cousin's hand, and bade her welcome.

"Don't gush, Hepsy, but take Cousin Bertha into the guest-chamber," said Bell, disdainfully.

Hepsy took the travelling-bag, and led their visitor up stairs; not into the fireless, sombre guest-chamber, however, but into her own cosey bedroom.

"It is too bad to give you so much trouble," said Bertha, as she brushed out her short curls, having much ado to keep back her tears. "I ought to have written you that I was coming; but, you see, mother and I have been travelling about, and we did not know when we should arrive here."

"Where is your mother?" asked Hepsy.

"Only two or three miles away, visiting Aunt Dora, you know, and she is to meet me here in a few days."

"How jolly!" exclaimed Hepsy, with honest fervor. "*We* can get acquainted so much easier without older people about us. I am very glad you came. Of course we cannot have quite as fine dinners as if mother were here; but you don't mind, do you?"

"Indeed, I don't," answered Bertha, and she put her arms around Hepsy's neck and kissed her.

While smiles and kisses were bestowed above stairs, the kitchen resounded with groans and grumblings.

"There never was another family under the sun with such a lot of ragtag relations," fumed Elsie, "and I wish this one was out West again with her beloved tomahawks. I suppose, now, Hepsy will decline to go out with me this afternoon as she promised. It is time we were off this moment. Are you ready, Hepsy?" she asked, as that young person came into the room.

"Why, surely, Elsie, you would not leave cousin?" was the astonished answer.

"Just as if the little Westerner would know that it is not quite the thing!" cried Bell, derisively.

"She is our relative, anyhow." Here Hepsy stopped short, for Bertha's step was heard on the stairs.

Bell took up her book again, pretending to read.

It was plain that no help could be expected from her, so Hepsy set about preparing tea, with a brave effort to be bright and merry enough to atone for her sisters' brusqueness, but yet with a secret anxiety lest her culinary skill prove unequal to the occasion; and the task was no easier when she heard the outside door shut, and caught a glimpse of Elsie in her best bonnet, as she brushed by the window on her way out of the garden. However, Hepsy set the little tea-table as finely as for a festival, decorating it with ferns grown in the little fernery she had cherished so carefully all through the long winter. Even Bell's eyes sparkled when summoned into the sitting-room where the meal was spread.

"Right cosey, Hepsy," was her approving comment. Under the influence of the good cheer, Bell's freezing manner toward her cousin thawed out, and Bertha began to feel that she had misjudged her; especially as she helped them clear away the table, and actually agreed to Hepsy's proposition, "to run over to the Whitneys', and invite the the young folks for the evening." And a grand evening they had of it, well nigh raising the gabled roof of the old house with games more ancient than its ancient timbers.

When Bertha climbed up that night into the high four-poster, with its quaint carvings and spotless canopy, it was with the solemn conviction that the two cousins standing on each side to tuck her snugly in, were the dearest girls in all the world.

"They have taken such a deal of trouble to amuse me," she thought, gratefully.

But where was Elsie? Having so pleasant a time that to return home was not to be thought of. She wrote a little note to Bell, next morning, and sent it by a small urchin who had some difficulty in accomplishing his errand, as the great brass knocker was almost above his reach. Bertha was passing through the front hall at the moment, and hearing the fumbling outside, opened the door.

"This is for you," said the child, shoving the note into her hand, and beating a rapid retreat. Bertha opened it, wondering if the handwriting was Aunt Dora's, and read at a glance:

"Dear B.,—I am having a splendid time, and shall not be at home until dark. In the meantime, I devoutly hope that our little Western squatter will have taken herself off. Don't be too civil, or she will stay forever. I know the sort. Please send over my blue dress and lace collar.

ELSIE."

Bertha turned the paper over, and slowly comprehended that it was intended for Bell; and just then her cousin, who was leaning over the balusters, called her name sharply. Bertha shut