The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson XII.—SEPTEMBER 19.

QUARTERLY REVIEW.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. 1. The Creation,
Gen. i. 1-3; ii. 4-8.
2. The Fall and the Promise,
Gen. iii. 1-15.
T. 3. Cain and Abel,
Gen. iv. 3-15.
4. The Covenant with Noah,
Gen. ix. 8-19.
W. 5. The Call of Abram,
Gen. xi. 31, 32; xii. 1-10.
6. Abram and Lot,
Gen. xiii. 1-18.
T. 7. Abram and Melchizedek,
Gen. xiv. 12-24.
8. The Covenant with Abram,
Gen. xv. 1-18.
F. 9. Abraham's Intercession,
Gen. xviii. 16-33.
S. 10. Lot's Escape from Sodom,
Gen. xix. 12-26.
S. 11. Trial of Abraham's Faith,
Gen. xxii. 1-14.

HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON.—The lessons for this quarter cover a period of over 2,000 years from the creation of man to the great trial of Abraham's faith, and include subjects of surpassing interest.

1. The first four lessons deal specially with the *Beginning of things*. Get the class to tell you about the First Life, or Creation; the First Man; the First Sin, and how it came; the First Promise of a Saviour (Gen. iii. 15); the First Child, and his sad history; the First Altar of which we have record (though, doubtless, Adam must have offered sacrifices from the time of the Fall); contrasting the altars of Cain and Abel; the First Death, and the circumstances attending it; the First Covenant; the First great Judgment against sin.

These lessons settle the great questions which have puzzled the wise of all ages, as to the origin of matter; of our world; of the human race, and the question of its unity; as to the beginning of evil in the world.

2. Lessons four and ten, refer to the two terrible events, which more than all others have stamped themselves upon the human mind and upon the literature of the nations, as showing God's wrath against sin, and the terribleness of his judgments. In almost all nations, even to some North American Indian tribes, have been found traditions of the Deluge; while the destruction of Sodom has witnessed for many generations "how the wickedness of man has once worn out the long suffering of God."

3. Lessons four and eight present us natural signs as tokens of the unchangeable covenants of God. The rainbow continues to say to us, as to Noah, "No more flood," and is a pledge of God's faithfulness to his word; while the stars in the sky tell nightly of the countless number of Abraham's spiritual seed.

4. Lessons seven and eleven give us types of our Lord Jesus Christ—Melchizedek setting him forth as both priest and king, and referred to in Hebrews; and the ram caught by his horns in the thicket, presenting Jesus to us as our substitute, even as the ram was offered up in the place of Isaac.

5. Six lessons out of the last seven, picture the wonderful character of Abraham. Lesson five, "The Call of Abram," strikingly shows his *Obedience;* which was prompt, unquestioning, perfect, leading him at the age of 70 to leave his own land and kindred for a strange and hostile country, in which he was to have no certain dwelling-place, relying alone upon God's word.

Lesson six, "Abram and Lot," reveals his *Magnanimity* towards Lot, as also God's care for him, after Lot's departure.

Lesson seven, "Abram and Melchizedek," shows his spirit of *Self-denial* in declining Sodom's riches after his victory over the kings. It also teaches us the value of decision against temptation. Abram knew how to say No!

Lesson eight, "The Covenant with Abram," tells of a *Faith* that was "counted to him for righteousness."

Lesson nine, "Abraham's Intercession," shows him in *Prayer*, and suggests to us our intercessor, Christ, before the throne.

Lesson eleven, "The Trial of Abraham's Faith," shows the patriach in the crowning act of faith, and brings out his complete *Consecration* to God.

Show how this whole grand life of Abraham was the outgrowth of simple faith in God, and that the faith which was "counted to him for righteousness," was one which wrought in him holy living.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

I.

The whole account of creation was given, not primarily to teach science and history, but to teach religion. God teaches you this lesson of his work in creation, in order that you may share the blessings of his greater work in redemption.

II.

The temptation itself must have occurred in *some literal way*, let the opponent of a literal interpretation suggest a more probable literal way than the one given in this lesson. Consider if any more promising method of approach to Eve was open to Satan, than the one he is here said to have adopted. Satan is still in the world, tempting to sin—whom RESIST. Recognize Satan by his tempting you to disobey God. He who was tempted in all points like as you are, yet without sin, is always ready to help you. You must ask him to help you, and then you must *let* him help you.

III.

Your offering to God, in return, a part of his gift to you, is that *all* belongs to him. How gently and kindly the Old Testament Jehovah deals with a murderer; but the murderer is punished. Sin drives you from the face of God. Hating God makes you hate your brother. Hating is murder.

IV.

When you see the rainbow in the sky, and admire its beauty, consider that God has said of himself: "I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature." This covenant was but part of his ways of grace for the redemption of the world.

V.

Your hope of salvation through Christ, depended on Abraham's fidelity — a fidelity maintained almost four thousand years ago, and almost five thousand miles away—how long a reach of influence your own conduct, in the providence of God, may have. In no way can you so much bless others, or be so much blessed yourself, as by simply believing and obeying God.

VI.

Let your overruled mistakes and sins make you meek and gentle and generous, as Abraham let his make him. If you are the stronger, be so magnanimous that it would be more to your advantage to have been the weaker. If you are the weaker, teach yourself submission by considering that, had you been the stronger, you would have foregone, of choice, the same advantage that you must now forego, of necessity.

VII.

Consider well and *plan* your efforts; not trusting wholly either to Divine assistance, on the one hand, or to your own strength, courage, or good will, on the other. All other priesthood—that of the Mosaic ceremonial included—was the type and prophecy of the one true and real priesthood of Jesus. Commit yourself *beforehand*, with your conscience and your God, to the nobler course, so that if, when the occasion arrives, temptation assail you to act selfishly, you may, like Abraham, fortify yourself with recollection of your better resolution. Be always able to say, "It is not Sodom that has made me rich."

VIII.

God is a shield to you, not less than he was to Abraham, if, by believing God, you have become a child of Abraham. To believe God is, rationally regarded, an act or work of righteousness performed within the soul.

IX.

Use hospitality without grudging; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. God is willing to have humility and faith argue points of his administration with him.

X.

It is yours to choose whether angels shall be to you ministers of salvation, or visitors of destruction. God spares the world, as he spared Sodom, only until the elect be saved out of it. You may be apparently in the way of salvation among the truly redeemed, and notwithstanding, be lost.

XI.

Distinguish clearly between tempting to test and to strengthen character, and tempting to undermine character. Doubt not but, in some wise way, God is also testing you. Make it a maxim of your life: God will provide.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Show that Jesus is in all of these lessons; that every one points, in some way to him; that the Old Testament is full of Jesus, though we may not, at first, see him as clearly as we do in the New. God was, all the time, teaching the people through various object-lessons; and, in many ways, of the Saviour whom he was going to send.

JESUS.

1. The Word, by which the world was made.
2. The Child, who was to bruise Satan.
3. The One whom the slain lamb was to keep in memory.
4. The Ark of Safety.
5. The Blessing of the World.
6. The Prince of Peace.
7. Priest, like Melchizedek.
8. Our Shield.
9. Our Intercessor.
10. The Way of Escape.
11. The Lamb, slain for the sins of the world.

—Abridged from the *Baptist Teacher*.

Youths' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 89.

MENTAL PICTURE FROM SCRIPTURE.

See the strong massive walls and closed gates of an ancient city, around which death-like silence prevails. It is beautifully situated in a fertile plain, and graced by many a shadowy palm. The only figures observable are two noble warriors near the city, engaged in earnest conversation. One stands in an attitude of reverence and attention; in the hand of the other is a drawn and glittering sword. A vast encampment may be observed in the distance.

Who are the two persons? What is the scene and where is it to be found?

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

91. Give the names of the 12 flowers comprised in the following bouquet:

1. A woman and her shoe; 2. an English bird and a piercer; 3. a wild beast and a girl's name; 4. a saccharine substance and a vegetable; 5. before noon and brightness; 6. a reddish colour; 7. a bluish colour; 8. a woman's name and a precious metal; 9. the king of day and a blossom; 10. parts of the face; 11. two girls' names; 12. a recluse and a covering for the head.

92. Curtail a curved bridge, and leave part of a circle; a cap, and leave a black bird; anxiety, and leave a carriage; a depression, and leave a wild beast's dwelling.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 88.

Temperance Acrostic: Water, Isaiah, Nergal, Elisha, Incense, Sisera, Ai, Moriah, Ophir, Chios, Korah, Erastus, Redeemer.

"WINE IS A MOCKER."

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

87. Cedars, Fir-trees, Chesnut-trees. Ezekiel xxxi. 8.

88. Fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlick. Numbers xi. 5.

89. The sons of the priests. 1 Chron. ix. 30.

90. They must have it cut. Ezekiel xliv. 20.

The Little Red Cushion.

A STORY FOR GIRLS.

"Cornelia Evarts!"

Little Miss Prim snapped out the words, with as much of an air as if she had a hundred or two scholars, instead of a small district school; so small, that you could almost put the whole thing under a good-sized umbrella, and walk away with it.

"Yes'm," came back in a meek little voice, from other end of the room.

"I'm not going to bear this noise any longer. No, I am not!" declared Miss Prim. "So do you just walk up here to the desk, this very minute!"

Two small feet stumbled out into the passage between the well-worn wooden benches; and the little girl walked slowly up to the big desk, till she stood exactly in front of the sharp little eyes of the teacher, who looked her all over keenly from head to foot.

"What have you been doing to make all the children laugh? at last she said.

"Nothin,'" said Cornelia, dragging her well-worn shoe back and forth over the old school room floor. And then with a small stop, that just saved her from a falsehood, added, "Only"—

"Only *what*?" said Miss Prim sharply, and adjusting her spectacles, for better sight. "Speak out now!"

"Nothin,'" again said Cornelia, but with a gasp she came up again. "I didn't mean ter; I"—

"I can't help what you *meant* to do," replied Miss Prim severely, and she opened a drawer under the old desk. "Now then"—

She brought out what looked like a wad of paper, but when unrolled, it proved to be a huge cap, which she proceeded, with great deliberation, to fit on Cornelia's head.

"I've had trouble enough," she said, "all this morning, so that I can't hardly hear myself think. Now, I'll see if I can stop it. Wait a bit; you must get the corn-cob in"—

"Oh, I don't want *that*," cried Cornelia, under her fool's-cap, which Miss Prim had jammed, like an extinguisher, over her countenance; and watching timidly the teacher's movements. "Oh no, I don't!"

"But it's just what you're going to *have*," said Miss Prim, with a nod, "so, open your mouth." And she held up a big corn-cob, ready to pop in, the moment she saw the two rows of little white teeth.

So Cornelia had the mouthful slipped in, and then, in obedience to Miss Prim's command, she mounted a little cricket in front of the teacher's desk, and turned a comical face of distress to the other scholars, who, one and all, set up a laugh at her appearance.

She couldn't cry, because the corn-cob wouldn't let her; nor yet could she beg the teacher to take it out, and give her any other punishment under the sun, than to make her the laughing-stock of the whole school.

All she could do was to stand there in utter misery, rolling her eyes at the clock to watch its slow hands point out her release.

"Now," exclaimed Miss Prim, having fixed her as a public warning for all other naughty children, "I shall see what you have been hiding in your desk that has made such a disturbance among the scholars. I shall see for myself!"

So she walked down between the two rows of benches, having all eyes upon her, till she came to Cornelia's little old desk. Without a second's pause, she flung back the lid and exposed to view —*what?*

A little heart-shaped pincushion of red silk, sewed with painstaking care, and stuck with pins that formed crooked little letters, but each one set by loving fingers. And the letters were "MISS PRIM!"

The little, thin, stern teacher staggered back, and rubbed her eyes.

Then she picked up the little cushion, and started with rapid footsteps for her desk.

"Cornelia"—out came the corn cob at the same moment—"what is this for?" she asked, holding it up.

"You said," mumbled Cornelia, rubbing her mouth with her fat little hand, "that 'twas your birthday to morrow; I heard you tell Aunt Johnson so—an' I wanted to s'prise you—I did."

"Well, you *have!*" cried Miss Prim, throwing her thin arms around her, and giving her a dozen or more kisses, that nearly knocked the breath out of her. "Don't you ever forget *that*; I've had the biggest surprise I've ever had in my life, and a lesson, too!" she added, with a humble little droop to her voice.

"Children," and she tore off the fool's-cap from the little brown head before her, then turned and faced them all, "I ought to wear this myself—only," and a smile quivered over her thin lips, "I suppose it wouldn't look very well for your teacher to be so punished for her carelessness.

"But," and she held as high as she held as she could the little red pincushion for them all to see, "this will always say to me 'Be sure, before you find fault!'"—*Margaret Sidney in Youth's Companion.*

Good men have the fewest fears. He has but one who fears to do wrong. He has a thousand who has overcome that one.

Plucky.

A STORY FOR BOYS.

The boy marched straight up to the counter.

"Well, my little man," said the merchant, complacently—he had just risen from such a gloriously good dinner—"what will you have to-day?"

"Oh, please, sir, mayn't I do some work for you?"

It might have been the pleasant blue eyes that did it, for the man was not accustomed to parley with such small gentlemen, and Tommy was't seven yet, and small of his age at that. There were a few wisps of hair on the edges of the merchant's temples, and looking down on the appealing face, the man pulled at them. When he had done tweaking them, he gave the ends of his cravat a brush and then his hands travelled to his vest-pocket.

"Do some work for me, eh? Well, now, about what sort of work might your small manship calculate to be able to perform? Why, you can't look over the counter."

"Oh yes, I can, and I'm growing, please, growing very fast—there! see if I can't look over the counter!"

"Yes, by standing on your toes; are they coppered?"

"What, sir?"

"Why, your toes. Your mother could't keep you in shoes if they weren't"

"She can't keep me in shoes anyhow, sir," and the voice hesitated.

The man took pains to look over the counter. It was too much for him; he couldn't see the little toes. Then he went all the way around.

"I thought I should need a microscope," he said very gravely, "but I reckon if I get close enough, I can see what you look like."

"I'm older than I'm big, sir," was the neat rejoiner. "Folks says I'm very small of my age."

"And what might your age be, sir?" responded the man with emphasis.

"I'm *almost* seven," said Tommy, with a look calculated to impress even six feet nine. "You see, my mother hasn't anybody but me, and this morning I saw her crying because she could not find five cents in her pocket-book, and she thinks the boy that took the ashes stole it—and I haven't had—any—any breakfast, sir."

The voice again hesitated, and tears came to the blue eyes.

"I reckon I can help you to a breakfast, my little fellow," said the man, feeling in his vest-pocket. "There, will that quarter do?"

The boy shook his head. "Mother wouldn't let me beg, sir," was the simple reply.

"Humph! Where's your father?"

"We never heard of him, sir, after he went away. He was lost, sir, in the steamer *City of Boston*."

"Ah! you don't say. That's bad. But you are a plucky little fellow, anyhow. Let me see;"—and he pondered, puckering up his mouth and looking straight down into the boy's eyes, which were looking straight up into his. "Saunders," he asked, addressing a clerk, who was rolling up and writing on parcels, "is Cash No. 4 still sick?"

"Dead, sir; died last night," was the low reply.

"Ah, I'm sorry to hear that. Well, here's a youngster that can take his place."

Mr. Saunders looked up slowly—then he put his pen behind his left ear—then his glance travelled curiously from Tommy to Mr. Towers.

"Oh, I understand," said the latter; he is small, very small indeed, but I like his pluck. What did No. 4 get?"

"Three dollars, sir," said the still astonished clerk.

"Put this boy down four. There, youngster, give him your name, and run home and tell your mother you've got a place at four dollars a week. Come back on Monday, and I'll tell you what to do. Here's a dollar in advance; I'll take it out of your first week. Can you remember?"

"Work, sir—work all the time?"

"As long as you deserve it, my man."

Tommy shot out of that shop. If ever broken stairs, that had a twist through the whole flight, creaked and trembled under the weight of a small boy, or perhaps, as might be better stated, laughed and chuckled on account of a small boy's good luck, those in that tenement-house