The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson X.—SEPTEMBER 5.

LOT'S ESCAPE FROM SODOM.

Gen. xix. 12-26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 23-26.

The two angels who left Abraham reached Sodom at even. Lot took them to lodge in his house. Being fully convinced of the ill-desert of the place, they took steps for its immediate destruction, according to the lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Remember Lot's wife."—Luke xvii. 32.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Escape from Sodom, Gen. xix. 12-26.
T. Impending Wrath, 2 Pet. ii. 1-17.
W. Unquenchable Fire, Mark ix. 38-50.
T. Worse than Sodom, Matt. xi. 20-30.
F. Testing One's Work, 1 Cor. iii. 1-15.
S. Watchfulness Demanded, Luke xvii. 20-37.
S. Abundant Salvation, 2 Pet. i. 1-11.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

With vs. 12: Gen. vii. 1; 2 Pet. ii. 7, 9.

With vs. 13: Gen. xviii. 20; 1 Chron. xxi. 15.

With vs. 14: Matt. i. 18; Num. xvi. 21, 45; Ex. ix. 21; Luke xvii. 28.

With vs. 15: Num. xvi. 24-26; Rev. xviii. 4.

With vs. 16: Luke xviii. 13; Rom. ix. 15, 16; Psa. xxxiv. 22.

With vs. 17: 1 Kings xix. 3; Matt. xxiv. 16, 17, 18; Phil. iii. 13, 14.

With vs. 18: Acts x. 14.

With vs. 21: Job xlii. 8, 9; Psa. cxlv. 19.

With vs. 22: Gen. xxxii. 25, 26; Deut. ix. 14; Gen. xiii. 10; xiv. 2.

With vs. 24: Deut. xxix. 23; Isa. xiii. 19.

With vs. 25: Gen. xiv. 3; Psa. cvii. 34.

With vs. 26: Luke xvii. 32.

THE PERILS OF UNBELIEF.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Destruction Impending, Vss. 12-14. II. Scarcely Saved. Vss. 15-22. III. Wholly Destroyed, Vss. 23-26.

QUESTIONS.—For whom did Abraham intercede? To whom? With what success? Who went to investigate Sodom? What record of Sodom is given in Gen. xiii. 13? What friend of Abraham was living there? Why did he live in such a place? What calamity had already befallen him there? By whom was he saved from that? Was this escape due in any measure to Abraham? (Gen. xix. 29.)

I. Vss. 12-14.—Over what city was destruction impending? Where was it located? Why was it to be destroyed? What effort did Lot make? With what success? Why was he so powerless? Why were they so careless?

II. Vss. 15-22.—With what words was Lot hastened in the morning? Give some text by which unbelievers are hastened. How were he and his immediate family brought out? Why was this urgency used? How are men now saved from the wrath of God? (Tit. iii. 5.) What new charges were laid upon them when out of the city? What charges are laid upon all who now are saved?

III. Vss. 23-26.—By what means did the Lord destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? What four items in vs. 25, show the completeness of this destruction? What happened to Lot's wife? What warning is given in the Golden Text? What about her should we remember?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—*Verses* 12, 13.—*The men.* In verse 1, called "the two angels." The article there shows that they are the same as those previously said to have been entertained by Abraham, and to have left him on their way to Sodom. *Son-in-law.* This is so expressed as implying uncertainty whether Lot had sons-in-law. The "sons and the daughters," on the other hand, are referred to, as if well understood to be in Lot's household. *Whatsoever thou hast.* This does not, apparently, mean things, but persons. There is no sign that Lot had a chance to carry off property. *We will destroy.* "We are about to destroy." Angels are frequently spoken of in Scripture as agents of destruction.

Verses 14, 15.—*Went out.* The angels had just before rescued Lot from the lascivious violence of the Sodomites, and secured him within his house. Lot now ventures forth again. *Which married his daughters.* The simplest way, is to understand that some of Lot's daughters had married, and were living with their husbands outside of their father's house, while two remained unmarried, at home. *That mocked.* "That made a jest." Those Sodomite sons-in-law did not, for a moment, admit to themselves that Lot's warning was true. *Lest thou.* The household, represented in its head.

Verse 16.—*And while he lingered, the men laid hold.* Omit the "while," which the translators have supplied. "And he lingered; and the men," etc. It was perfectly natural that Lot should hesitate.

Verse 17.—What a suggestion this verse contains, of the urgency with which God commands and entreats sinners to flee from the wrath to come! The whole history is an *enacted parable*; one cannot resist the feeling that it was designed to be such. *To the mountain.* The mountain-range of Moab, at the foot of which Zoar lay.

Verses 18, 19, 20.—His gain-saying is a lively image of the conduct of alarmed sinners, afraid to stay in their worldly state, and yet dreading to leave it. Like them, Lot seeks to compromise. *Is it not a little one?* This question implies a request that Zoar, since it was a small place, might be spared from the general destruction.

Verses 21, 22.—Here, again, we have a striking representation of the grace and patience with which God will work to save the lost. *Called Zoar.* "Zoar" means "little." So named from Lot's language about it.

Verse 23.—The sun was just rising, as Lot entered the place. The sky was clear, what an enhancement of the suddenness and horror of the doom, to see a rainfall of such elements descending from a smiling firmament!

Verses 24, 25.—The repetition of the name of Jehovah here has a peculiarly impressive and solemn effect. This overthrow of Sodom and of Gomorrah gave form to the imagery under which the final destruction of the wicked is often spoken of in Scripture.

Verse 26.—Whether the wife's looking back imported longing and regret, or whether mere curiosity, is not told us. The different manner in which she and Lot seem to be dealt with, indicates a difference in character between the two. Lot is, in the New Testament, expressly called "just Lot." See 2 Pet. ii. 7. It is probable that the wife had partaken of the corruption in the midst of which she lived. The Saviour's allusion to her (Luke xvii. 32), is significant. Perhaps she lingered far enough behind Lot, to be naturally involved in the swift destruction, from which he barely escaped. *A pillar of salt.* Her body was, perhaps, encrusted with salt—the result of a drenching saline shower falling with the storm.

The region lying south of the Dead Sea is, according to immemorial tradition, and according also to indications derived from names of localities, the site of the Cities of the Plain. This tract remains, to the present day, nearly waste, although it is better watered than any other part of the whole country. The Dead Sea is, in this southern part of it, very shallow; the adjacent plain shelving into it so gradually, that the winter rains raising the level of it slightly, sometimes cause it to overflow a distance of several miles. Various mineral substances, such as would naturally be present after volcanic action, are found in this region—among them salt, both in huge masses, at points, and in thin incrustations over the surface of the ground. A shower of descending eruption from an acting volcano, might, perhaps, produce the effects described in the lesson.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

We read that Lot's righteous soul was vexed, hearing the bad words, and seeing the bad deeds of the people of Sodom (2 Pet. vii. 8); but he did not move away, and we do not read of his trying to make them better, or teaching them about God, nor of his setting up an altar, as Abraham did. He must have got used to their wickedness. Any way, he cared more about getting rich than for serving God, or he would not have stayed there. And his wife loved Sodom. His daughters, too, were so used to hearing and seeing the wickedness around them, that they married some of these very men!

Lot was surrounded, on all sides, by evil companions; for there were not even ten good people in all the city. How can he break out, and get away? Ah! God had not forgotten Lot, and he loved Lot's good uncle, Abraham. God snatched Lot like a brand from the burning.

Tell of the *angel's warning*—of Lot, hesitating, lingering, waiting, wanting to keep as near the place as possible. How, at last, the angels had to lay hold of them, and force them away.

Those who hear the message of Jesus, and refuse to obey, are worse even than the people of Sodom. Jesus himself said than if they had known as much as you do, they would have been sorry for their sins, and turned away from them. God destroyed Sodom for an example to us, to show us that he must punish the wicked; but he will hear his Son's prayer, and save those who have heeded the warning.

God sent angels from heaven to save Lot; but he sent his own Son to save us. If Lot had neglected to be saved in God's way, how could he have escaped? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

—Abridged from the *Baptist Teacher*.

Youths' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 87.

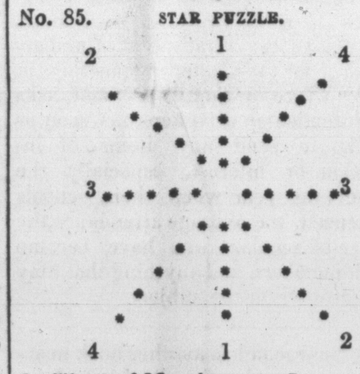
CENTRAL ACROSTIC.

One persecuted for receiving Paul.
That which on certain wicked men did fall.
Of the Greek letters, this is last of all.
A town which Azariah built again.
Waters where many mighty kings were slain.
A prophet fleeing from the Lord in vain.
A woman unto Boaz near of kin.
One who wept bitterly because of sin.
That which a prophet three whole days was in.
One who appeared to tempt the sinless Lord.
One who was slain by treacherous Joab's sword.
City of which Melchisedec was king.
One who in prison did God's praises sing.

The centrals in due order place and read.
A plain command which all of us should heed.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 85. STAR PUZZLE.



1. Client of Morpheus am I,
Suspending all but breath;
Refreshing latent strength and life,
Though image mute of death.
In every nation are we known—
Fruit's coating, some will say;
In eating oranges, I trow,
'Tis us you'll throw away.
2. We are excrescence of the skin,
Found mostly on the hands;
New stalks of grain from cornfields borne
In stacks, beds, bottles, bands.
3. Some portions of the whole am I,
And now a leather strip.
4. A pain acute. Some cars in which
You'd like to take a trip.
With reason's light to find me out,
You need not travel far;
For if my words are placed aright,
You'll find I form a star.

From point to point, I this one thing may claim,
Backward and forward, each letter is the same.

—*Selected.*

No. 86. BEHEAD AND CURTAIL—a city of Palestine, and leave a city of Joshua's time.
" A praying mother, and leave a prophetess.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 86.

1. P ilate.
2. H aman.
3. I saac.
4. L ot.
5. A bednego.
6. D aniel.
7-8. E unice and Lois.
9-10. P haraoh and Herod.
11. I saiah.
12. A braham.

PHILADELPHIA. Rom. iii. 7-13.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 82. Co-nun-drum.
83. El-do-ra-do.
84. A N N A
N O O N
N O O N
A N N A

The following stanzas appeared in our pages some years ago. We have had a very pressing request to again place them before our young readers, being assured that they have a special charm for them, and help them to remember the order of the books, and with some are connected with very pleasant reminiscences. We recommend our studious young readers to commit them to memory:

The Books of the Bible.

In GENESIS the world was made;
In EXODUS the march is told;
LEVITICUS contains the law;
In NUMBERS are the tribes enrolled.

In DEUTERONOMY again
We're urged to keep God's law alone;
And these five books of Moses make
The oldest writings that are known.

Brave JOSHUA to Canaan leads;
In JUDGES oft the Jews rebel;
We read of David's name in RUTH
And FIRST and SECOND SAMUEL.

In FIRST and SECOND KINGS we read
How bad the Hebrew State became;
In FIRST and SECOND CHRONICLES
Another history of the same.

In EZRA captive Jews return,
And NEHEMIAH builds the wall;
Queen ESTHER saves her race from death.
These books "historical" we call.

In JOB we read of patient faith;
The PSALMS are David's songs of praise;
The PROVERBS are to make us wise;
ECCLESIASTES next portrays

How fleeting earthly pleasures are;
The SONG OF SOLOMON is all
About the love of Christ; and these
Five books "devotional" we call.

ISAIAH tells of Christ to come,
While JEREMIAH tells of woe,
And in his LAMENTATIONS mourns
The Holy City's overthrow.

EZEKIEL speaks of mysteries,
And DANIEL foretells kings of old;
HOSEA calls men to repent;
In JOEL blessings are foretold.

AMOS tells of wrath; and Edom
OBADIAH is sent to warn;
While JONAH shows that Christ should die.
And MICAH where he should be born.

In NAHUM Nineveh is seen;
In HABAKKUK Chaldea's guilt;
In ZEPHANIAH Judah's sins;
In HAGGAI the temple's built.

ZECHARIAH speaks of Christ,
And MALACHI of John, his sign,
The prophets number seventeen,
And all the books are thirty-nine.

MATTHEW, MARK, & LUKE & JOHN
Tell what Christ did in every place;
ACTS shows what the apostles did,
And ROMANS how we're saved by grace.

CORINTHIANS instructs the Church;
GALATIANS shows us faith alone;
EPHESIANS true love; and in
PHILIPPIANS God's grace is shown.

COLOSSIANS tells us more of Christ,
And THESSALONIANS of the end;
In TIMOTHY and TITUS both
Are rules for pastors to attend.

PHILEMON Christian friendship shows;
Then HEBREWS clearly tells how all
The Jewish law prefigured Christ;
And these epistles are by Paul.

JAMES shows that faith by works must live,
And PETER urges steadfastness;
While JOHN exhorts to Christian love,
For those who have it God will bless.

JUDE shows the end of evil men,
And REVELATION tells of heaven,
This ends the whole New Testament,
And all the books are twenty-seven.

—*Sunday-School Times.*

Only half the Widow's Mite.

A gentleman called upon a rich friend for some charity.

"Yes, I must give you my mite," said the rich man.

"Do you mean the 'widow's mite'?" said the gentleman.

"Certainly," was the answer.

"I shall be satisfied with *half* as much as she gave," said his friend. "How much are you worth?"

"Seventy thousand dollars."

"Give me, then, your check for thirty-five thousand. That will be *half* as much as the widow gave; for she, you know, gave her *all*."

People often try to shelter themselves behind the widow's mite, but her example, rightly interpreted, would fill to overflowing the channels of true benevolence.—*S. S. Weekly.*

Oriental Bargains.

Every traveller in Palestine learns from experience that he has to pay an ample price for everything he receives and enjoys. There seems to be no fixed price, but the vender or employe gets all he finds it possible to procure. But one of his methods, peculiar enough, is to begin his bargain by making no charge. We remember that the dragoman to whom we applied at Nablus to conduct us to Damascus refused at first to make any charge whatever for his services, but declared he would be amply rewarded for his eight days' going and returning by the mere companionship of a Frank. On urging him to name a price, he put so high an estimate upon his valuable aid that we were compelled to forego the pleasure of his company. We found out that it was all a ruse. He was hoping to be offered *our* price, thinking it might be a large one, and was determined that if it did not suit him, he would then raise it as high as he might see fit. Every one who has travelled at all leisurely through the country has met with similar instances of shrewd bargaining. Dr. Thomson says he has been presented with hundreds of houses and fields and horses, and bystanders were called in to witness the deed, and a score of protestations and oaths were taken to seal the truth of the donation; all of which meant just nothing, or rather just as great a price as he could possibly be induced to pay. A knowledge of this adroit method of dealing, still current in Palestine, greatly facilitates our understanding of Abraham's purchase of a burial place for his wife. Hebron is much the same to-day as in his time. If one were to arrange for the purchase of a tomb for a member of his family, he would likely be told that he could have one for nothing.—There is great exclusiveness in the matter of tombs, and a high price is expected. The Hittites said to Abraham, on his application for the purchase of one: "Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." Beautiful compliment! but only compliment. Abraham, however, was too shrewd a man not to see through the trick; so he repelled the liberal offer, but insisted on paying for the burial-place. Ephron, with all due politeness, said: "Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead." But Abraham understood the proposition for *buksheesh* too well to accept, and insisted on an outright purchase. So Ephron named four hundred shekels of silver. But "four hundred shekels; what is that betwixt me and thee?" A mere trifle by name, but a very large price in fact. This, however, was serious business for Abraham, and he made no objection. So he proceeded to weigh out the money, just as men do now in Palestine, with a little pair of scales, to see that none of the coins are clipped. But Oriental custom requires that all the specifications be named in every contract. When you buy a house, not only the building, but every room in it, must be named, above and below, down to the kitchen, pantry, stable, and hen-coop. So when Abraham bought a field, he also bought the cave that was therein, and all the trees in the field, and all that were in all the borders round about. Then this sale was effected in public, just as all similar transactions in these days are brought about. When any sale is now effected in a town or village, the whole population turn out to witness it, in the space about the city gate. All the people take part in discussing the matter with as much interest as if they were personally concerned. In this way the transaction acquires legal force; it has many living witnesses.—DR. J. F. HURST, in *Harper's Magazine.*

A girl asked a druggist friend to tell her an easy way to take castor oil. He invited her to take a glass of soda water, exclaiming, after she had drunk it, "There, you have taken the oil in that glass of soda water." "Oh, dear," she replied, "I am so sorry, for it was for mother I wanted it."

He said her hair was dyed, and when she indignantly exclaimed, "'Tis false!" he said he presumed so.

I. Toldyouso is one of the most knowing men in the country, though to be sure he is a little late.