The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson IX.—AUGUST 26, 1883.

GIDEON'S ARMY.
Judges vii. 1–8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 2, 3.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."—Judges vii. 20.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, Judges vii. 1–8.
T. Renewed Apostasy, Judges vi. 1–10.
W. Gideon Called, Judges vi. 11–32.
T. Gideon's Army, Judges vi. 33;–vii. 8.
F. Gideon's Victory, Judges vii. 9–25.
S. Gideon's Judgeship, Judges viii. 22–35.
S. The Christian's Strength, Eph. vi. 10–24.

JEHOVAH'S MERCY TO FAITHLESS ISRAEL.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. A Deliverer Raised Up, Vs. 1. II. A Chosen Band Selected, Vs. 2–6. III. Deliverance From God Only, Vs. 2, 7, 8.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1.—Of what tribe was Gideon? ch. vi. 35. Who appeared to him? ch. vi. 12. (*Cf.* John i. 18) What commission did he receive? ch. vi. 14. What signs given to him? ch. vi. How did he get the name Jerubbaal? ch. vi. 25–32. What did this act signify? How did Gideon collect an army? ch. vi. 33–35.

Vs. 2–6.—Why was the army too large? How reduced at first? According to what law? Who head the procession that goes down to hell? Rev. xxi. 8. How was the army reduced again? Meaning of "lapped"?

Vs. 2, 7, 8.—What did God wish to prevent and secure? What was Israel's war-cry? Give the result briefly. What was clear as to the victory? Of what is Gideon an example? What comes from having many unconverted members in a church? What is the tendency of infant baptism? What is the greatest of all Baptist principles?

Scripture Searchings.—What threatenings had God long before made against the Amalekites and Midianites? What weapons does Paul say Christians must use in fighting spiritual foes?

Four judges, such as the Lord promised to raise up (see the last Lesson), had appeared in the two hundred years since the death of Joshua, viz.: Othniel, who delivered Israel from the oppression of the King of Mesopotamia; Shamgar, Ehud, who slew Eglon the King of Moab, and delivered Israel from the Moabites; and Deborah, who, associated with Barak, delivered their people from Jabin, King of Canaan. At the opening of this Lesson, Israel had, because of their sin, been oppressed by the Midianites for seven years; and, in answer to prayer (vi. 6), Gideon was called to deliver them. He accomplished this, and judged Israel forty years.

NOTES.—Vs. 1.—*Jerubbaal, who is Gideon.* In chapter vi., we find the description of the terrible condition of Israel after having been oppressed and overrun by the Midianites for seven years, the record of their repentance, and also the call of Gideon to be their deliverer. He was the youngest son of Joash, of the Abiezrites, an undistinguished family of the half tribe of Manasseh, that lived west of the Jordan. From the angel's address to him (vi. 12) as a "mighty man of valor," it is possible that he may have distinguished himself in war against the roving bands of Midianite plunderers, whose countless multitudes (vi. 5) annually destroyed all the produce that Israel raised, and compelled the impoverished people to burrow in the earth for shelter. As Gideon was threshing a little wheat by his father's wine-press, in Ophrah, to conceal it from the rapacious enemy, an angel came to him with his commission from the Lord. With the modesty of true merit, Gideon disclaimed any special ability to deliver Israel, but was silenced by the Lord saying: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Then a mighty faith took possession of him, which was strengthened by miracles performed before him by the Lord, as a proof of his divine call. He blew his trumpet as a signal that he was Israel's leader, and sent messengers among the tribes, and raised an army of 32,000. The name *Jerubbaal* (contender with Baal) was given him (vi. 32) because he destroyed Baal's altars, and was thus known as Baal's enemy. This name was a constant reminder to all who heard it, of Baal's inability to "plead for," or help himself. *All the people that were with him.* The 32,000 from the neighboring tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon, and Naphtali. *The well of Harod* (well of trembling). The name is a memorial of the cowardice displayed there (vs. 3). *Midianites.* A powerful, nomadic nation of Arabia, sprung from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham, by Keturah (Gen. xxv 2). At this time they were allies of the Amalekites, and of the Arabian tribes called collectively "the children of the east" (vi. 3). The locality of the *hill of Moreh* is not definitely ascertained.

Vs. 2.—*The Lord said . . . the people are too many.* Man would have said "too few." Only 32,000 of Israel to confront 135,000 Midianites! Less than one to four, and the Israelites fearful, while the enemy was not only strong in numbers, but in confidence of victory. *For me to give*, etc. The battle is the Lord's. Israel's army was not too many for *them* to gain a victory; indeed, it was far too small. But when God fights our battles, "one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to fight." As God was about to *give* the Midianites into Israel's hands, there must not be so large a company to receive the gift that they may be tempted to *vaunt themselves, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.* This would have been the case had the army retained its original number, as the sequel proves; for there are no such boasters as cowards.

Vs. 3.—*Whoso is fearful and afraid*, etc. This astonishing proclamation was one directed in the law to be made for every war in which Israel should be engaged (Deut. xx. 8). The reason is given, "lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." Cowardice is contagious, and a few timorous men may beget a panic. The result in this case was amazing. Two-thirds of the whole army avowed themselves cowards; 22,000 out of 32,000 turned their backs upon their country's standard in the hour of sorest need.

Vs. 4.—*Yet too many.* No human generalship is this. Many of the 10,000 were good men, but not thoroughly consecrated to the work. God means to put his soldiers into positions where nothing but a strong faith can sustain them. A second test is applied. God said, *I will try them, i. e.*, unconsciously to themselves; and in that trial they would reveal hidden character. *Of whom I say unto thee*, etc. The Lord took the whole matter and responsibility upon himself. He chose the plan of battle, and the men of faith to carry out his plan.

Vs. 5, 6.—It is when *brought down unto the water* that the test is applied. *Every one that lappeth*, etc. Those who lapped *as a dog lappeth*, instead of kneeling down to take long draughts at their leisure; employed their hand, as a dog his tongue, hastily throwing the water from the hand to the mouth with great dexterity. These evinced a more eager and earnest spirit than those who took the more self-indulgent position; and little things reveal the man. The Jewish interpreters give this additional explanation: "The worship of Baal was accompanied by prolonged prostrations, so that his worshipers became accustomed to this attitude, and it was natural for them to assume it in drinking. The others who remained erect had not been brought up in his worship, but in that of Jehovah." Thus the line was drawn between those faithful to Jehovah, and those who had gone over to Baal. This would show the apostasy of Israel to have been well-nigh universal.

Vs. 7, 8.—*By the three hundred.* Men of faith and courage, who would go, at God's command, where they could neither see nor understand. *Will I save you.* A positive promise of deliverance and an assurance that salvation is of God. *The people.* The three hundred. *Took victuals . . . and trumpets.* That is, from the 10,000 in verse 7, as many as they needed; so that each of three hundred had a trumpet and a pitcher. This was part of the plan of the battle. The three hundred took not swords and spears, but trumpets; as if each were the leader of a large band. As they surrounded the camp of Midian at night, they needed pitchers to cover their torches until the moment when, at a given signal, and with the war-cry: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," they blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers, and let their torches shine out suddenly upon the confused and panic-stricken enemy. Each torch-bearer and trumpeter seemed but one of a mighty host, and as if sounding the charge and giving the light for a great army of Israelites to make their onset. The Midianites, suddenly aroused from their sleep, turned their swords upon each other, while the three hundred lighted them to the work of their own slaughter, and cheered them on by the sound of *the trumpet.*

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

The secret of Gideon's greatness and success was a mighty faith, and the fact that, as in Joseph's case, the Lord was with him.

God is not always on the side of the heaviest artillery, but as King Asa said: "It is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power."

A severe test applied to our churches would doubtless cause a great scattering; but that test will come when we stand before the great Judge.

God works by the few, or, it is to be feared, he would not work at all. Let the little bands of Sunday-school workers take courage.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

For seven years previous to the date of the Lesson the Midianites and Amalekites had been wasting and impoverishing them, and no one seemed able to deliver. They were obliged to resort to dens and caves in the mountains, for hiding places. Then Israel "cried unto the Lord." They felt their need. God heard, and sent a prophet who reminded them of the cause of their suffering. Gideon was raised up for their deliverance. Briefly tell his history as given in chapter vi. Describe the gathering at the well of Harod, and bring out the points of the entire story of the Lesson. Notice especially that God prepared Gideon by giving him a lesser duty first. This being faithfully done, he was given courage to undertake a greater duty. Thus God always prepares us.

Notice also that the great mass of those who responded to the call of Gideon proved themselves cowards. They thought themselves feeble-folk, and this made them unwilling to undertake anything for God.

This is a Lesson of FAITH. Gideon had faith, else he had not broken down the altar of Baal; nor sounded his call for the rally against the enemies of Israel; nor accepted the words of the Lord when so assuringly given him. He took *God's Word* as the basis of his faith.

But how strange the *weapons!* Do these mean anything to *us?* LAMPS, PITCHERS, TRUMPETS.

Now tell the rest of the story, showing the success of Gideon's three hundred, and that it was all the Lord's doings. So, though our strength be small, he who fights *our* battles will surely give us success.

—Abridged from the *Baptist Teacher.*

Henry Ward Beecher tried an "incubator" at his Peekskil farm. He says he got twenty chickens from 500 eggs, and five of those chicks survived.

An Englishman bequeathed his two daughters their weight in £1 bank notes. One of the girls received £54,200 and and the other £59,344.

Nothing is so reasonable and cheap as good manners.—*Cervantes.*

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee."*

Jesus, crucem meam tollo,
Omnia linquere pro te;
Despicato, orbo, solo,
Eris omnia pro me.
Pereant ambitiones,
Spes, et quæ desidero,
Bonas sub conditiones,
Nam cœlestia teneo.

Sim a mundo despicatus;
Sic tractatus Jesus sit:
Sim mortalibus fraudatus,—
Quod a Jesu nunquam fit.
Et dum es amicus meus,
Possint nihil homines;
Deus vis, prudentiæ Deus,
Gaudia et splendor es.

Possint homines turbare,—
Propius tibi urget me;
Vitæ opera vexare,—
Cœlum gratius facere.
Sum plenissime servatus;
Nihil me sollicitet:
Omnibus que preparatus,
Omnibus quæ Deus det.

Fide, precibusque eam,
Et ad cœlum propero;
Diem ad æternam meam,
Me portante Domino.
Cito mea terminetur
Terræ peregrinatio;
Spes in gloriam mutetur,
Laudem et precatio.

* It seems a matter of regret that this exquisitely sweet and touching hymn should appear in the *Psalmist* in an *abridged* form. In the new Methodist Hymn Book it is given in full. Rev. Henry F. Lyte was the author. "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide," was composed a few days before his death by the same.

S. T. RAND.

For the Christian Messenger.

Aged People.

Mr. Editor,—

Your correspondent, Mr. Rand, has given quite an interesting account of an old people's dinner, describing the intellectual tnd bodily vigour of the parties. He might, had he thought of it, added to his "memorial acrostic" the name of a Mrs. Taylor, who resides near Berwick, Cornwallis, who is over one hundred years old, and who retains her mental faculties in a remarkable degree. But the most remarkable event of the kind that ever took place in any age or any part of the world is described in the 18th chapter of Genesis. Mr. Rand's story has led me to meditate much upon it. Abraham was *ninety-nine years* old, and seems to have been as vigorous and active both in body and mind as the most active among us in "these degenerate days." Mr. R. brags on the activity of his "ninety-nine" year old friend, though he has to move round on *two sticks*, and very slowly and cautiously at that. What must we think of the hero of the tale in Genesis moving about so nimbly, running off to the herd to fetch his calf, tender and good, and ordering all hands about, to have the butchering and the baking and the cooking done up "quickly," and waiting himself on his guests while they took their dinner "under the tree?"

The venerable lady in her 84th year, in Mr. R.'s narrative, who hopped up off the sofa, and flew round, and had the potatoes boiled and the ham and eggs fried for her unexpected guests in so brief a time, certainly deserves credit. All honour to her! May she "add another score of years" in peace and health! But the *head cook* in our narrative must bear off the palm by a long chalk. She was *ninety* years old. How long she was in getting up the dinner we are not told. But the whole narrative implies that it was done with great expedition. We know what was done. Cakes were *mixed* and *baked*, and veal was *dressed* and *cooked*, and with the utmost despatch. So much is historical. Now let imagination, or better, a little common sense, fill out the rest. Let the poet take his "pencil," and the painter his "brush," and read us off the narrative.

1. Let us look at the "city of this Syrian Prince, the "Bedouin encampment" of this Arabian Sheik. There are the circles of tents, the overshadowing trees, the pasture grounds hard by, some of the numerous herd lying down chewing their cud, others standing lazily in the shade brushing away the flies with their tails, while a drove of beautiful little "bossies" are clustered together in one corner of the "calf pasture," while a score or more of servants are lounging round or asleep in the shade.

2. There in his tent door nods the aged patriarch, the lord of the establishment, taking his quiet siesta in the heat of high noon. Suddenly his drowsiness is gone, he starts up; "three men," strangers, are standing at a little distance, evidently travellers, needing food and rest, and personages of rank too, to whom it will be both honourable and agreeable to treat with hospitality. He springs up from his tent door and *runs* to meet them. Only think what must have been his physical vigor to perform such a boyish feat as that! He salutes the strangers respectfully, urges them to allow him to supply their wants as a favour, and his kindness is accepted.

3. Now then, Mistress Sarah, how long have the hungry travellers got to wait before you can have a good and wholesome dinner ready for them? The narrative gives us cause to praise you for intelligence, activity of body, and what is still of more importance, you are exhibited as a model wife as well as a model mistress. Your worthy husband anticipated no domestic storm, or sour looks or muttering, because, without consulting your ladyship, or enquiring whether it might be agreeable or not he invited his guests to dinner, "then' hastened into the tent and "ordered" you to get ready "quickly," without any delay, three measures of meal, mix it and bake it into cakes upon the hearth. Sarah, of course, could call as many servants to her aid as were needed. And Mr. Rand must not try to make it out that all "our girls" are the lazy drones he seems to insinuate. Some of them, I can tell him, can hop round and prepare a meal—(only furnish them with the *meal* and the *veal* and the *butter* and the materials for rousing up a good roaring fire in a hurry)—with an alacrity that the most fastidious need not complain of. This will assist us in judging how much time it would take to get the dinner ready for the angels. Abraham having rushed into the tent and issued his "orders," doubtless in the blandest and most winning tone of voice, now dashes into yonder cluster of calves, seizes one about four weeks old, that has had the milk of two cows, and is therefore "tender and good," and he is in a twinkling in the hands of an expert young butcher, with the directions to dress it as quickly as possible. Now, how many minutes will be needed? I would like to learn from some "trusty brother of the trade" how many minutes would be required, upon a "spurt," to take a calf from the "stump" and have slices enough ready for the griddle to satisfy three hungry men? Could it not be easily done in *fifteen minutes?* One blow with a scimitar or sharp cleaver would take off the head; two or three skilfully directed applications of the knife and the skin may be off, without any danger of annoyance from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, by the time the blood has all run out and the calf is done kicking, say *five minutes;* to remove the entrails is but the work of a few minutes more. Surely we have ample time for the cook, who had got all ready for the roasting in the meantime, and is standing ready with her platter to receive "steaks," to have them on the griddle in fifteen minutes from the time the young man commenced operations. In another fifteen they would be well broiled and buttered. By this time the "cakes" would be done, and the honoured guests have the savory mess before them, and their honoured host waiting on them "under the tree."—Time, say forty-five minutes, or three-quarters of an hour.

We will leave "brother Rand" to find out the respective *ages* of the parties, and to write a "Memorial Acrostic" upon the event, and we will leave it to any of your readers to point out any inaccuracy or extravagance in our "imaginings."

SENEX.

Oldenville, July 30th.

The following documents from the Prince Edward Island Association have been forwarded with a request for publication in the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER. It is pleasant to know that our brethren on the Island are in hearty sympathy with us in our efforts to extend the Redeemer's kingdom.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

In submitting our report on Education we regret that circumstances prevent us from presenting so full a report as we wished to have done, but we learn with gratification that the past year has been successful and prosperous with all of our educational institutions.

The question of Denominational or State Colleges has been settled, we hope for all time, in the Lower Provinces, by the emphatic voice of public opinion in favor of the former. Baptists have undertaken to maintain and conduct their own educational institutions, of which they are justly proud, and the largely increased responsibilities thus assumed present themselves with demands upon our loyalty, our honor, and our zeal for the good work. A large part of the indebtedness of $33,000 which rests upon Acadia College is still to be provided for, while the Endowment Fund is much below the amount required to maintain the College in an efficient manner. The Governors are making a special and earnest effort to pay off the current indebtedness before the meeting of Convention in August, and it is hoped that every Baptist will recognize the call of duty, and be ready to contribute as the Lord hath prospered him to sustain a cause which has been largely instrumental in leading to the prosperous condition of the denomination to-day. It is surely fitting that forty years of earnest and heroic struggle might this year be crowned with success; and, brethren, we are able to weave the garland. May God help us to appreciate our ability to do so.

The institutions at Wolfville have been well attended during the past year, and conducted with the energy and success which has characterized past years.—Eleven young men have received the B. A. degree; one other has completed his three years' course in the Theological Department; and six young ladies received diplomas from Acadia Seminary. Horton Academy has done excellent work under efficient management, and will open a fine Freshman Class this fall. The Baptist Seminary recently opened at St John by the N. B. Education Society has just completed a year of marked success. With an efficient staff of instructors, and 84 pupils, its first year has been all that its most ardent supporters could desire. Two young men from this institution at its late anniversary passed a creditable Matriculation Examination into Acadia College. We are pleased to learn that it is the intention of holding such Matriculation Examinations at St. John each year, and doubt not that the Seminary will prove a valuable feeder to Acadia College. The staff of teachers at all our institutions are men and women of excellent qualifications, tried experience, and possess the entire confidence of the denomination.

Arrangements are being made to increase the efficiency of the institutions at all points, and in view of the noble work done in the past for the denomination and the cause of God, we would commend them anew to the sympathies, prayers, and liberality of all our churches.

Respectfully submitted,
J. B. WOODLAND, *Chairman.*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS.

Whereas the vast majority of our church members regularly study our denominational papers, we consider it unnecessary to furnish information in our report concerning the location of the past year's work of our brethren in the foreign field. And an additional reason for our silence concerning the actual work of our missionaries is the fact of our having brethren in our midst who in their speeches concerning missionary work will furnish information more extensive and accurate than could be afforded by members of this Committee. But we do wish to place before our brethren the principles and teaching of Holy Scripture concerning Foreign Missions. The Lord Jesus Christ, Commander-in Chief of the Gospel Army, has issued marching orders to all Christians to the effect that we should "Preach the gospel to every creature;" and the grand question asked by the Bible is, "Shall the mandate of the Saviour be obeyed or disobeyed? Shall we be loyal to the "King of Kings," or traitors? Shall we be true soldiers of the "Captain of our Salvation," or shall we be mutineers, breakers of the army regulations, to be finally drummed out to the tune of the "Dead March?" It is at present certain that our Foreign Mission Board is in financial difficulties, and it is probable that if their financial embarrassments are not speedily relieved a missionary family must be recalled, which recall your Committee emphatically believe would be to the lasting disgrace of the Baptist denomination. To prevent this sad diminution of our missionary forces it is absolutely necessary that the Board of Foreign Missions be sustained earnestly, unanimously and systematically by our whole denomination, and we record it as our conviction that the best way by which to advance the interests of our Foreign Mission, as well as the interest of other objects embraced in the Convention Scheme, is for the Convention Scheme to be prosecuted as a whole, and not for special and individual advocacy of the several parts thereof.

Concerning the Home Missionary department we beg to express our satisfaction that Bro. Gordon, of the Home Mission Board is with us to-night. His presence will atone for the brevity of our report concerning Home Mission work. But your Committee express the earnest hope that the pastorless and to day neglected districts of this Island may be speedily worked in the interests of our denomination, and that this our wish may be gratified, we earnestly trust that funds may be forthcoming to enable our brethren of the Home Mission Board to do greater things for us in the future. We record our satisfaction in having Bro. Gordon with us, and trust that the financial embarrassment which he informs us is causing curtailment of Home Mission enterprise may soon become a thing of the past.

GEORGE W. MCNEIL, *Chairman.*

A NOTED BUT UNTITLED WOMAN.

[From the Boston Globe.]

Messrs. Editors:—

The above is a good likeness of Mrs. Lydia E. Pinkham, of Lynn, Mass., who above all other human beings may be truthfully called the "Dear Friend of Woman," as some of her correspondents love to call her. She is zealously devoted to her work, which is the outcome of a life-study, and is obliged to keep six lady assistants, to help her answer the large correspondence which daily pours in upon her, each bearing its special burden of suffering, or joy at release from it. Her Vegetable Compound is a medicine for good and not evil purposes. I have personally investigated it and am satisfied of the truth of this.

On account of its proven merits, it is recommended and prescribed by the best physicians in the country. One says: "It works like a charm and saves much pain. It will cure entirely the worst form of falling of the uterus, Leucorrhœa, irregular and painful Menstruation, all Ovarian Troubles, Inflammation and Ulceration, Floodings, all Displacements and the consequent spinal weakness, and is especially adapted to the Change of Life."

It permeates every portion of the system, and gives new life and vigor. It removes faintness, flatulency, destroys all craving for stimulants, and relieves weakness of the stomach. It cures Bloating, Headaches, Nervous Prostration, General Debility, Sleeplessness, Depression and Indigestion. That feeling of bearing down, causing pain, weight and backache, is always permanently cured by its use. It will at all times, and under all circumstances, act in harmony with the law that governs the female system.

It costs only $1. per bottle or six for $5., and is sold by druggists. Any advice required as to special cases, and the names of many who have been restored to perfect health by the use of the Vegetable Compound, can be obtained by addressing Mrs. P., with stamp for reply, at her home in Lynn, Mass.

For Kidney Complaint of *either* sex this compound is unsurpassed as abundant testimonials show.

"Mrs. Pinkham's Liver Pills," says one writer, "are *the best in the world* for the cure of Constipation, Biliousness and Torpidity of the liver. Her Blood Purifier works wonders in its special line and bids fair to equal the Compound in its popularity.

*All must respect her as an Angel of Mercy whose sole ambition is to do good to others.

Philadelphia, Pa. (3) Mrs. A. M. D.

Oct. 4. 1 y.