

## BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

THE CANADIAN MONTHLY, for August, is to hand with the usual amount of very readable matter.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY for August, is a more than usually interesting number of an established favourite.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE keeps always well up—giving, as usual, some of the best articles from the chief periodicals of the day and at a very moderate cost.

HISTORY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK. (New York and Chicago: A. S. Barnes & Co.)—In part X. the narrative enters the nineteenth century, increasing in interest, and presenting many instructive glimpses of social life.

THE CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, for July, 1880. (Toronto: James Bain & Son.)—Contains the usual amount of interesting and timely matter. Its "Notes of the Day" and "General Survey" are always especially acceptable.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE CALENDAR for the year 1880-1, is as usual a neat and handy publication, supplying all the usual and necessary information about that Institution. It can be had at Hart & Rawlinson's, Toronto.

SPIRITUAL SONGS FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. (New York: Scribner & Co.)—Very nicely got up. The most of the established favourites will be found in this collection, with some which we have no doubt will also become favourites by and by, and others not so likely and not so deserving.

THE GOSPEL IN ALL LANDS. (Eugene R. Smith, 64 Bible House, New York.)—It was feared that this excellent periodical would have to stop publication from want of adequate support. The first number of the second volume, however, is to hand, and under the new management we hope it may have a prosperous and useful career.

THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, for August, has the usual amount of well written and more or less interesting articles. No one would think of agreeing with all that is advanced, but at the same time it is both pleasant and profitable to notice what the "International" is saying and what course it takes in the current discussions of the day.

GOOD COMPANY. (Springfield, Mass.)—This magazine improves from month to month, and is now of its kind one of the best. Some people may think that there is too much story in it, but that sort of thing is, in these days, thought indispensable and the stories in "Good Company" are always of a healthy character and often positively good.

FOUR HAPPY DAYS. By F. R. Havergal. (New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co.; Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.)—This is one of Miss Havergal's little books for children, giving an account of four happy days in the history of a little girl. We can scarcely say that we regard it as one of the happiest of Miss H.'s productions, though of course the tone and tendency are all that could be desired.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE CHRONICLE.—Nothing shews more clearly the hold which the temperance question has taken upon the better part of the people in the Church of England than the perusal of such a periodical as this. The Church Temperance Association has the two archbishops and a good many of the bishops among its office bearers. The "Chronicle" is its official organ and evidently does its work with efficiency and *con amore*. There is much to be done, but an ever increasing number are going into the enterprise, and with God's blessing they will succeed.

THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY. Edited by G. M. Adam. (Toronto: C. E. M. Publishing Co.)—The double number, for July and August, of this well-conducted magazine will be found full of interest to the teaching profession and to all who value intellectual progress. It contains a review of "Goldwin Smith's Life of Cowper," the continuation of "Readings from an Old Geography," practical papers on philology, grammar, intellectual training, etc., and an article entitled "The Arraignment of the Minister of Education." In this last mentioned paper, as well as in the editorial notes, Mr. Crooks is held responsible for the offences of the Central Committee, especially in the matter of book-publishing Inspectors. The Arts and other Departments are well filled, and the class lists of the Toronto University June Examinations are given.

DEMOSTHENES' ORATIONS, II.; JOAN OF ARC; FRONDES AGRESTES. (New York: I. K. Funk & Co.)—These are the last published of the cheap "standard" series, and are, like those that have gone before, well deserving the attention of those who wish to have good substantial reading matter in their homes but are not able to afford expensive editions. For less than what many a poor man spends every week on tobacco these reprints of Funk could be had regularly, and how any sensible person could hesitate in their choice in such a case is more than we can comprehend. It is a fact that many a professedly Christian home is all but bookless, while it stinks with tobacco smoke and sometimes even with beer; but such a fact is as unaccountable as it is disgraceful.

MANY of our readers have doubtless seen reference, during the summer, to the "Ober-Ammergau Passion Play." Some will understand the matter, others will not. It appears that every ten years there is a representation by the peasants of the Bavarian highlands of the passion and death of our Lord; it is under the direction of the Romish priests, and is repeated at intervals during the season, the representation takes up most of one day, and Sunday is generally chosen for the purpose. That godless *litterateurs* should glorify the performances and seek to dignify them with the title of "Art in the Mountains," etc., we can understand, but we cannot understand how Christian men, ministers, should fall into the same line of talk, and not only attend the performances, but go with the avowed object of reporting them for the edification of English Protestants. Stripped of all the glamour that has been thrown around them, these passion-play performances are simply blasphemous parodies of the sufferings of our Lord. The surroundings are of the usual character of such gatherings; for the spectators it might just as well be a horse race; they go to see a sight; while the real promoters, the Roman priests, chuckle at the thought that in this way, at any rate, they can "spoil the Philistines," i.e., get money out of Protestant pockets. We read, the other day, that a similar representation was being organized in one of the Western States. We trust that such impiety will never be allowed on Canadian soil, and that any attempt to introduce it to our people will be met with prompt and energetic action.

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

#### LESSON XXXIV.

Aug. 22, 1880. } THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM. { Gen. xv. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."—Rom. iv. 3.

#### HOME STUDIES.

M. Gen. xv. 1-21.... Covenant with Abram.  
Tu. Rom. iv. 1-18.... Righteousness of Faith.  
W. Rom. v. 1-11.... Justified by Faith.  
Th. Gal. iii. 10-29.... Heirs according to the Promise.  
F. Ps. xxxiii. 1-11.... Sin Covered.  
S. Rom. x. 1-21.... Christ our Righteousness.  
Sab. James ii. 1-26.... Faith without Works.

#### HELPS TO STUDY.

In this lesson we take up the Bible narrative, unbroken, at the point at which our last lesson left it, viz., Abram's return from the slaughter of the eastern kings and the rescue of Lot.

The promise made to Abram some eight or ten years before we now find repeated, in more definite terms, and taking the form of a covenant, ratified on the part of Abram by offering sacrifice, and on that of God by sending down the fire of acceptance.

The following are the principal topics: (1) Abram's Encouragement, (2) Abram's Complaint, (3) Promise of Descendants and Inheritance Repeated, (4) Justified by Faith, (5) Sacrifice and Vision, (6) Egyptian Bondage and Return therefrom foretold.

I. ABRAHAM'S ENCOURAGEMENT.—Ver. 1. Here we have but a particular instance of the interest which God always takes in the welfare of His faithful people, and of the support which in one way or another He affords them in the struggles and trials of life.

After these things: that is, after Abram's victory over the eastern kings and his interviews with Melchizedek and the king of Sodom as recorded in the preceding chapter; the narrative now confines itself once more to the personal biography of Abram in its connection with the history of redemption.

The word of the Lord came. This phrase, so common throughout the prophetic books of the Bible, occurs here for the first time. These special revelations were made in the absence of the written Word, of which they now form part, helping to render fresh revelations unnecessary.

Fear not. Even Abram had his periods of fear and des-

pondency, and of anxiety regarding the future. The particular cause of his fears on this occasion may have been that the recently vanquished enemies should return in greater force and avenge their discomfiture. The "fear nots" of the Bible are many, and full of promise to the believer. See Ex. xiv. 13; xx. 20; Isai xxxv. 4; xliii. 1; Matt. x. 31; xxviii. 5; Luke ii. 10; v. 10; John xii. 15; Rev. i. 17.

I am thy shield. Compare Psalm iii. 3; xxxiv. 11; Prov. xxx. 5. Could not He who had already given Abram the victory over his enemies defend him from their future attacks? See Psalm xxvii. 1.

Thy exceeding great reward. God is the rewarder of those who seek Him, and their highest reward is to find Him. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. He Himself, greater than all His other gifts, is the portion of His people. These words of encouragement, addressed to the father of the faithful, are the inheritance of His spiritual children in all ages.

II. ABRAHAM'S COMPLAINT.—Vers. 2, 3. The following striking application of this part of the lesson is from the "S. S. Times":

"Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless. Abram didn't see how the Lord could make good all of his promises to him. The obstacles in the way seemed absolutely insurmountable. And that is what is the trouble with most of us in our doubting. The promises are plain enough; but how can God fulfil them, with things just as they are? If we have no money to pay the baker, how can God see that we have our daily bread? With all the enemies who are about us, and with all the misleading appearances which give colour to their slanders, how can God shield our good name from dishonour? With that child's peculiar disposition indulged as it has been until now, what can God do that will give him a useful life or make him a blessing to others? With things as we see them in our own case, or in the case of those about us, how is it possible for God to do as He has promised to do, and as we wish to have Him do? 'Yes, I know that God says so; but just look at the case as it is. How can God bring things out as He has promised when they have come to their present pass?'"

"Look now to yonder heaven. Ah! that is it. You may be hemmed in on every side; but you are not hemmed in overhead. If you cannot see a great way before you, or on either hand, you can see far enough straight up. When you question what God can do, look above and see what God has done. This looking at obstacles, fixing our eyes on the hills or the bugs, on the lions or the bad men in our pathway, is discouraging business. It makes us believe that there is no way out of our difficulties. But to look up into the clear sky, and to see the moon and the stars in their beauty, inspires us to the feeling that there are no difficulties out of which God cannot find the way for us. What is it that has discouraged you? Is it your empty purse; or your dreary 'profit and loss' account; or the business outlook of the times; or the parched fields; or your wayward boy; or the suspicious looks of those who used to trust you? Whatever it is that has made you hopeless, 'look now toward heaven': there is nothing discouraging in that direction. If the Lord who made the heavens, and keeps the moon and the stars in their places, has given you a promise, you may be sure that He can make that promise good."

III. PROMISE OF DESCENDANTS AND INHERITANCE REPEATED.—Vers. 5-7. Abram's paradox was solved by a definite intimation that a son should be born to him in his old age, whose descendants, in accordance with the terms of the original promise, should be very numerous and inherit the Land of Canaan. See Deut. x., Heb. xi. 12. The "Westminster Teacher" says that the comparison of Abram's seed to the stars "relates emphatically to his spiritual seed, who 'shall shine as stars, for ever and ever' (Dan. xii. 3)."

IV. ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH.—Ver. 6. Compare Rom. iv. He believed the promise, and the promise contained the hope of salvation. Abram and all the other Old Testament saints lived and died in the faith—more or less clear—of a Saviour to come. Without Christ and His atoning sacrifice, the animal sacrifices of the old dispensation would be utterly meaningless. It is faith in Jesus Christ that in all ages puts the penitent sinner in possession of a righteousness that acquits him before the divine law which he has broken, and secures his eternal happiness—this is justification; but the salvation thus appropriated by faith partly, and mainly, consists in being freed from sin and made personally holy—this is Sanctification. These two go together. Who would have it otherwise? Certainly not those who have really accepted the terms of the Covenant of Grace.

V. SACRIFICE AND VISION.—Vers. 8-12. In answer to Abram's request for a sign, God directs him to prepare a sacrifice and, over it, makes with him a solemn covenant.

Take me an heifer, etc. Regarding this mode of covenanting the "National S. S. Teacher" says: "The animals mentioned are those that in aftertimes were specially ordained for sacrificial offerings. The age chosen was one that marked their full first maturity and vigour. An allusion is made to this method of covenanting in Jer. xxxiv. 18. The covenant was made according to an ancient custom, by which the animals were divided lengthwise along the spine, the birds being undivided, and the separated parts were put over against each other in their natural order, a path being left between them through which the covenanting parties could pass. The ceremonial of the covenant of old consisted in the contracting parties passing between the dead animals with the imprecation that, in case of a breach in the covenant, it might be done to them as to these animals."

VI. EGYPTIAN BONDAGE AND RETURN THEREFROM FORETOLD.—Vers. 13-18. The want of exactness in the number of years during which the bondage in Egypt was to continue is rather in favour of the truth of the Bible than against it. An impostor, inventing this prophecy after its fulfilment would probably have been careful to give the exact number, four hundred and thirty, as in Ex. xii. 40, whereas it was only the round number, four hundred years, or as we would say, four centuries, that was communicated to Abram.