

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.
 LESSONS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER.
 7. Nov. 14. Joseph the Wise Ruler. Gen. xli. 41-57.
 8. Nov. 21. Joseph and his Brethren. Gen. xli. 30-34; xlv. 1-8.
 9. Nov. 28. Jacob and Pharaoh. Gen. xlvii. 1-12.
 10. Dec. 5. The Last Days of Jacob. Gen. xlviii. 8-22.
 11. Dec. 12. Last Days of Joseph. Gen. l. 1-26.
 12. Dec. 19. Review.
 13. Dec. 26. Lesson Selected by the School.

Lesson VIII.—NOVEMBER 21.
 JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.
 Gen. xli. 30-34; xlv. 1-8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1-4.

Because of the severity of the famine in Canaan, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy food. After trying them in various ways, as the intervening chapters show, Joseph disclosed himself to them as shown in this lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”—Romans xii. 21.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Joseph and his Brethren, Gen. xli. 30-34; xlv. 1-8.
- T. Joseph's Brethren in Egypt, Gen. xlii. 1-20.
- W. Their Return Home, Gen. xliii. 21-38.
- T. Benjamin Sent to Egypt, Gen. xliv. 1-14.
- F. Entertained by Joseph, Gen. xlii. 15-34.
- S. The Brethren Tested, Gen. xlv. 1-29.
- S. Graciousness of Jesus, Acts ii. 22-41.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 30: 1 Sam. xiii. 1.
- With vs. 32: Gen. xliiii. 9.
- With vs. 33: Ex. xxxiii. 32.
- With vs. 2: John xi. 35; Luke xix. 41.
- With vs. 3: Acts vii. 13.
- With vs. 4: Gen. xxxvii. 28.
- With vs. 5: Matt. x. 26, 28, 31; Luke xii. 7; ii. 10; xii. 32; John xii. 15.
- With vs. 8: Judges xvii. 10; Job xxix. 16.

GRACIOUSNESS OF THE BELOVED SON.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Melted to Tears, Vss. 30-34. 1. II. Confessing his Kindred, Vss. 3, 4. III. Stilling their Fears, Vss. 5-8.

QUESTIONS.—What drew Joseph's brethren to Egypt? Tell how they had been received?

I. Vss. 30-34; 1, 2.—What could Joseph not do? (Vs. 1.) By whose appeal had he been so moved? (Gen. xli. 18-34.) For what had Judah pleaded? What part had he borne in the selling of Joseph? (Gen. chap. xxxvii.) What was he now willing to do for Benjamin? When Judah ceased speaking, what order did Joseph issue?

II. Vss. 3, 4.—How did Joseph make himself known to his brethren? How did his brethren feel?

III. Vss. 5-8.—What two things did Joseph bid his brethren not to do? On what grounds did he urge this? For what reasons had God sent him into Egypt?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 30.—The intervening chapters explain the connection. Judah is the speaker. He is pleading with Joseph, not yet recognized as his own long-lost brother, on behalf of Benjamin, that he be allowed to go back to Jacob, the father, offering to remain, himself, in Benjamin's stead. The *lad*. Benjamin. *His life is bound up in the lad's life*. “His soul is bound to his soul.” The same Hebrew expression occurs in 1 Sam. xviii. 1: “The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David.”

Verse 31.—*With us*. These words are supplied, perhaps without good reason, by the translators. *Thy servants*. That is, the brothers. These now effect, or perhaps they really feel, more consideration for their father, than they did when they sold Joseph.

Verse 32.—*Became surety*. Judah made himself responsible to his father for the safe return of Benjamin. *Then I shall bear the blame*. “Then I will bear the blame.” It is an offer to bear the blame, rather than a prediction merely that the blame will fall upon him.

Verses 33, 34.—Judah here shows that he acted in perfect good faith in making his offer to his father. He proposes to

take the place of Benjamin, and remain himself in pledge as a servant or bondman to Joseph. If we should call Joseph by his new Egyptian name, Zaphnath-paaneah, throughout this scene, we should, perhaps, get the effect of his personal presence better, as it impressed itself upon the beseeching Judah. Judah expresses a great deal of filial respect and sympathy for his father; perhaps no more than he had really learned to feel. Jacob was old now, and his sons, with their father, had seen trouble.

Verses 1, 2.—*That stood by him*. His attendant subordinates. The point was reached at which Joseph could no longer restrain his emotions. The touching eloquence of Judah's repeated allusion to the aged Jacob, was too much for Joseph's self-control. He had been indulging himself in a kind of luxury of reticence and concealed feeling thus far; but now the struggling heart beats too violently to be repressed. *He cried*. A last effort at self-command enabled him to dismiss his attendants, before he gave way to his emotions; but the order burst out from his lips in a cry, rather than in the tone of ordinary authority. The brothers were finally left quite alone in the sacred privacy of domestic relationship, when Joseph threw off the disguise of high rank and of assumed severity, under which he had hitherto appeared to his brothers. *And he wept aloud*. This loud weeping of Joseph was, no doubt, the very first action that followed the withdrawal of his attendants. He could not at once speak. His heart, so long kept down, beat too tumultuously for that; and the great dignitary simply wept, with sobs and with outcries that were audible beyond the room where he was. We can imagine the brothers, still not knowing who he was, gazing with astonishment at the spectacle.

Verse 3.—When Joseph recovered himself enough to speak, he said simply, “I am Joseph,” and, with true filial instinct, asked, “Does my father yet live?” The answer he already knew; but it would seem different to be told again, and now with the understanding, on their part, that it was his own father, as well as theirs, that they were talking of. But it is the brothers' turn to be speechless now. They were “confounded before him.”

Verse 4.—Joseph understood their situation. “I am Joseph, your brother,” whom ye sold into Egypt. He remembered his wrong to him, but forgave them that wrong.

Verse 5.—Nothing more magnanimous than Joseph's conduct can be conceived. He saw God's hand in what had happened. It was not so much that his brothers had wickedly sold him into Egypt, as it was that God had providentially sent him thither.

Verses 6, 7.—*Earing. Formation of ears. To preserve you a posterity*. To provide that the succession of Abraham's seed should not fail. The principal object of God's intervention on behalf of Joseph was the preservation of the Jews, to prepare a way for the coming of Christ. God blesses all for the sake of a few.

Verse 8.—Such a clear and confident declaration of God's purpose proceeding from Joseph, can be accounted for only on the supposition of his having lived a life of very close communion with God, or else of his enjoying, at this moment, a special Divine revelation. *Father to Pharaoh*. An Orientalism, to express the relation of honored and trusted counselor.

The natural pathos of this narrative is such as to carry irresistible evidence of its having its basis in truth.

It was habitual reverence toward God that had so kept alive and fresh, in Joseph's bosom, the instincts and impulses of natural affection.

What great powers of self-control, and capacities of tender emotion, may co-exist in the same bosom.

If you are a true child of God, your fellows can work you no ill that God will not change into good.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Study the connecting links of the story.

Show, that although twenty-two years had passed since Joseph was sold by his brothers, yet their sin had followed them all this time; they could not hide it

from themselves, and conscience, kept talking to them. When Simeon was shut up in prison, the whole scene came back to them; and they said, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” How could he trust Benjamin to them, when they had taken away two of his sons who had never returned.

Judah showed true love by being willing to be made a slave instead of Benjamin.

Joseph was only waiting to prove their repentance; then how freely, fully he forgave them. Once they had eaten dinner, and not offered him any. Now he goes to great trouble and expense to make a feast for them.

Joseph had forgiven his brothers years before, but he could not tell them so, and give them good things till they showed that they were truly sorry, and had left off their bad ways.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 98.

From the initials of the following described places find a name of the Holy Land:

1. The city which had the first Christian church in Europe.
2. Where the disciples were first called Christians.
3. That one of the seven churches of Asia which was most severely reprobated.
4. Where the ten brothers found Joseph.
5. The city near Jacob's well.
6. Where the Apostle Paul was born.
7. The country in the shape of a boot.
8. Where the widow's son was raised to life.
9. Where Paul preached his most learned sermon.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 131.

WHAT AM I?

I am the beginning of every thing; though nowhere in the world, yet I am part of every inhabitant of the earth. Without me, time could have no beginning, and this moment no end. Though I assist in theft and all dishonesty, I have never been in prison. Lawyers are never found with me, though I remain in the court-house, and am always with the magistrates there. I am much liked, especially, by the fair sex, who frequently gather to enjoy my company; and, strangely enough, I am largely imported from a country of which I form no part.

No educational movement ever existed without my assistance, though I myself have never been seen in the covers of a book. I lend my aid to works of charity, though I am ignored in pure benevolence, I have a part of every true heart, and am with a trusty servant from beginning to end. I was in town yesterday and to-day, and will be to-morrow afternoon, though you may look in vain for me in the morning or evening; but I am always found in the distant future.

132. Complete the following lines and find the name of the author:

Let Fate do her worst; there are relics of —, Bright dreams of the past which she cannot —; And which come in the night-time of sorrow and —, To bring back the features that joy used to —; Long, long be my heart with such memories —, Let the vase in which roses have once been —; You may break, you may ruin the vase if you —, But the scent of the roses will hang round it —.

133. TRANSLITERATION. Change Wind to Rain with but three words between.

134. Make a square of four words. A river in Germany. A lovely bird. The devil's work. To believe.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 97.

Sin and Death, dwelling in man.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 128.

A FLOWERY ACROSTIC. Rhodes. Oratory. Stood still. Eternity. ROSE.

129. Corn, morn, moan, mean, meal. Malt, melt, belt, beat, bear, beer. Sill, sell, seal, seam, beam. Beam, ream, roam, room, roof.

130. T (tea)
 S E A
 P A L M S
 S A R E P T A
 T E L E P H O N E
 A M P H O R A
 S T O R E
 A N A
 E (tea.)

The Two Old Ladies.

It was bright and clear and cold. The snow crumpled under the foot, and all the air was crisp. There was a hint of icicles on men's beards; but young faces looked fresh and happy.

Wrapping myself up like an Esquimaux, I started for a walk, and bethought me of two ladies. Each had passed her fourscore, but, alas, for the charm of my sketch, neither was poor, old, decrepit, or one of those “sister saints whose prayers are worth more to the church than the strongest man in it,” albeit he may be a man of honor and truth, of prayer and labour, with manifold treasures in heaven and on earth! No; these both had pleasant homes, kind children, and were moving heavenward in silk dresses and cushioned rockers.

Madame A. sat near the window of a bright, sunny, cheerful room, in a simple snowy cap and clean cashmere wrapper. She welcomed me with a smile, with that touch of heaven in it seen only on the face of early childhood or serene old age.

“Isn't this a perfect day?”
 “It is, indeed; I wish you could go out.”

“I ride quite often, and I enjoy sitting here and watching others. How rosy the young girls look? and most of them give me a bright smile as they pass. Such smiles make my whole morning cheery. My daughter gets her children off to school, and then has home duties, so I am quite alone in the mornings, and have time to enjoy other people's enjoyment as I sit and look out.”

“Can you not read at all?”
 “Only my Bibles. See what large type. How very nice for old eyes!”
 “They are indeed.”

“They are a great comfort to me. All my life has been crowded with blessings. I often wonder why God has been so good to me. Every ‘cloud has a silver lining.’ My father died when I was a mere child, but my mother—the sweetest, noblest of women—loved me as only a widowed mother can love, and all my memory of those early days is holy to me, they were so happy and she so pure;” and her face had a rapt look for a moment. “She was spared until I had a husband to love and lean upon, and then she went to the husband of her life—long love. How good God was not to take her when I would have been all alone! And, then, her passing away was so beautiful; she went to sleep here and woke there—no suffering, no agonising farewells.”

“I never pray to be delivered from sudden death. I leave it with Him who doeth all things well. He gave me a kind true husband; but we loved this pleasant world; we basked in its sunshine, and forgot there is a better, until God took our beautiful, bright boy, to make us look up, and see that God wills that our happiness shall not be for a few short years of time, but for endless ages. If He must, in His great love, He takes the less to give the greater. And thereafter my husband became an earnest, working Christian, and when he went to his reward, and met his holy, happy boy, whose lips and heart had never known a stain or sorrow of earth, how he must have praised Him who gave his Son and took ours, that we might have eternal life, and joy, and peace.”

“I shall see them soon—soon—so glorious in holiness and beauty that I shall not know them, but they will know me, and come to welcome me. I do not know why I wait, but God does, and that is enough.”

“I do. It is to teach us the beauty, the richness, and sweetness of resignation. Your daughter said, a few days ago, God had spared you to show her how to make her home sunny, and your son's life bright.”

“My daughter is very kind to me—as kind as if she were mine by birth; she sits with me all she can, and the children play in here a great deal when out of school.”

“She told me grandma's room is the pleasantest spot in the world to them. You enter into all their joys and sorrows and sports, and Sunday is their delight, for you tell them Bible stories, and their knowledge quite shames her sometimes; that Willie wishes there were two Sundays a week.”

“I think children ought to be helped to love Sunday, and can be. Anna did not come from a Christian home, but is a lovely Christian now.”

“She told me that your beautiful Christian spirit had won her to Christ, from whom it is caught.”

“Isn't my father good to help me make my dear ones happier, while I sit with folded arms, waiting, waiting?” and great thankful tears rolled down the furrows of her dear old cheeks.

“Working, working my dear madam, I am stronger for this hour. It is good to be here.”

“I am glad—glad to serve while I wait. Come often.”

“Indeed I will.”
 Thence I went to see Madam B.— Her dress and cap and bow were very nice, but had done full company duty, and, bearing many a record of service, they were now devoted to the morning wear. The room was clean, but lacked brightness; she was sitting, feet on the fender, and back to the window.

“I am glad to see you; I am always so lonesome.”

“It is a lovely morning.”
 “It is all the same to me. I stay right here all day long. I can't walk on the snow; I can't read all day long; if I ride I get chilled through and through; and so I sit here hour after hour and day after day. If Jane comes in, in comes Jennie hanging on to her skirts, so I have no chance to say or do anything. And Sunday afternoons I have to lock my door to keep those two boys out. I have brought up one family, and that's enough for one woman to do.”

“You are looking very well this winter.”

“Then my looks belie me. I have a good appetite, and don't suffer any pain, and sleep well; but my joints are stiff, and my head is heavy and dull.”

“But you're wonderfully well for fourscore.”

“But it is not very pleasant to be fourscore.”

“It is the threshold of the beautiful Beyond.”

“Well, the grave and the worm don't look very cheerful to me.”
 “But, heaven!”

“Well, yes, I suppose heaven is, but whom did you ever see that had come from there?”

“I do not suppose any one would wish to come back.”

“There ought to be some good hereafter to pay for all the trials we have here. I am sure I have had my share of them. My father was a man of a great mind, and it was dreadful to see him become imbecile, and mother was such an active woman, and she grew perfectly helpless; but my husband bore it nobly.”

“You were greatly blessed in him.”

“Yes, I was; but he was taken away when I needed him most. What a comfort he would be to me now! He was seventy-six, and his mind not broken at all.”

“But his children and you are spared seeing him lose his brain power.”

“But it is dreadful to see a man smitten down in full intellect; he might be so useful and happy.”

“You have an elegant home.”

“Yes, but those boys tear round and knock and break and destroy. I told Jane there is a bottom to every purse, but her husband wants to ‘enjoy his money,’ and so he lets the boys rampage through the place.”

“You must enjoy the grounds in summer, when you can walk out.”

“But it is so hot and dusty, and flies and mosquitoes and gnats; and I am never well in summer.”

“You are greatly blessed in your children.”

“Charles is making name and money, but what comfort have I ever had with him? He went off to a preparatory school at fourteen, and then to college, then law school, and then to a city partnership. I see him some two or three weeks in a year! I might as well not have a son, and Jane has her husband and her children, and they have taken her heart from me. I can see that.”

I rose. She said:—“Don't get up to go yet. I am so lonesome. You must? Well, come again; if I am here, I'll be glad to see you, and if I am not, you won't miss me. I don't think anyone else would much.”

How glad I was to get into the sunshine! I walked along, murmuring:— “Our life is as we make it; this world is as we take it; oh! let me not forget it.”