

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. xlv. 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. 3-22. 11. Dec. 12. Last Days of Joseph. Gen. i. 14-26. 12. Dec. 19. Review. 13. Dec. 26. Lesson Selected by the School.

Lesson VII.—NOVEMBER 14.

JOSEPH THE WISE RULER. Gen. xli. 41-57.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 46-49.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings."—Proverbs xxii. 29.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Joseph the Wise Ruler, Gen. xli. 41-57. T. Pharaoh's Dreams, Gen. xli. 1-24. W. Joseph's Interpretation, Gen. xli. 25-40. T. Plenty in Famine, 1 Kings xvii. 1-16. F. The Son Exalted, Psa. ii. 1-12. S. Food for the Famishing, Isa. lv. 1-9. S. Enough and to Spare, Luke xv. 11-24.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 41: Dan. vi. 3. With vs. 42: Esther iii. 10; iii. 2, 8; viii. 15; Dan. v. 7, 29. With vs. 43: Esther vi. 9; Gen. xlii. 6; Acts vii. 10. With vs. 46: 1 Sam. xvi. 21; Dan. i. 19. With vs. 49: Judges vii. 12; Psalm lxxviii. 27. With vs. 50: Gen. xli. 20; xlviii. 5. With vs. 52: Gen. xlix. 22. With vs. 54: Ps. cv. 16; Acts vii. 11. With vs. 56: Gen. xlvii. 14, 24. With vs. 57: Deut. ix. 28.

THE BELOVED SON IN EXALTATION.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Honor, Vss. 41-45. II. Plenty, Vss. 46-52. III. Famine, Vss. 53-57.

QUESTIONS.—How old was Joseph at this time? (Vs. 46.) How old was he when sold into Egypt?

I. Vss. 41-45.—What act of Joseph led Pharaoh to honor him so highly? How did Pharaoh express his purpose in vs. 38-40? Where only did he reserve to himself superior authority? How did Pharaoh express the absoluteness of Joseph's authority?

II. Vss. 46-52.—How is the plentifulness of the first seven years described? What means did Joseph employ for storing up food?

III. Vss. 53-57.—What came after the seven years of plenty? Describe how it increased. To whom did Pharaoh send the people? How did Joseph manage the distribution?

HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON.—I. Honor (vs. 41-45.) Joseph not only interpreted Pharaoh's dream (vs. 25-32), but also recommended a wise plan of action (vs. 33-36.) Joseph's new name, meant Preserver or Bread of Life. In this respect, Joseph was a type of Christ (John vi. 35). His marriage with the priest's daughter established his exalted social position.

II. Plenty (vs. 46-52.) Young as Joseph was, he proved himself capable and wise in his measures. He gave his personal supervision, going "throughout all the land of Egypt," to establish store-houses. The extraordinary abundance for seven successive years. This may have been from natural causes that does not make God any the less the author of it. He is always the cause of causes.

III. Famine (vs. 53-57.) "The seven years of plenteousness were ended"; "the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said." On the famishing people's cry to Pharaoh he answered: "Go to Joseph, what he saith to you, do;" the money of the Egyptians failed. Then (chapter xlvii) Joseph bought their cattle, their lands, and themselves, for Pharaoh. Not by accident did Joseph come to his exaltation. It was the outcome of personal character and of God's favor.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verses 41, 42,

43.—This extraordinary preferment of Joseph happened in consequence of his interpreting certain dreams of Pharaoh, which had baffled the divining skill of the wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh, as a reward, and in order to secure to himself the advantage of so much wisdom and good fortune, exalted Joseph to be a kind of viceroy—representative of the majesty and sovereignty of the king. Took off his ring. This ring was the royal signet-ring; that is, a ring containing a seal designed to be impressed upon state documents, as an evidence of their authenticity and authority. The transfer of the signet-ring signified the delivery to Joseph of the right to rule as king. Compare Esther iii. 10, 11. Fine linen. A material appropriately worn by the higher classes. Compare Esther viii. 15; Ezek. xxvii. 7; Luke xvi. 19; Rev. xix. 8. A gold chain. "The gold chain"—the one well known to belong among the insignia of viceregal sway. Ancient Egyptian sculptures represent the putting on of this chain as one of the ceremonies of such investiture of power. The second chariot. Only the king himself had precedence of Joseph.

Verse 44.—I am Pharaoh. This is sometimes understood to mean, "I reserve to myself the title of Pharaoh." The better way is to understand it, "I am monarch, and so I decree."

Verse 45.—Zaphnath-paaneah. "Preserver of life"—in prospective allusion to Joseph's services to Egypt, in the impending famine. Potiph-erah. On. An ancient city of Egypt, northeast from Memphis about twenty miles, known in ordinary history as Heliopolis—city of the sun—it being a seat of sun-worship. The priestly caste was the most exalted in the kingdom. The king was of this caste; or if not, he became so.

Verse 46.—Thirty years old. The Saviour's age when he began his ministry. Stood before. As minister of state. Compare Deut. i. 38; 1 Kings x. 8; Dan. i. 5. Went throughout all the land of Egypt. No doubt, to make the necessary inspections and provisions for the years of plenty and of scarcity to ensue.

Verses 47, 48, 49.—By handfuls. A proverbial phrase, implying abundant increase. Cities. This word does not imply large towns. Villages, rather, the so-called cities sometimes were. Granaries and store-houses for the surplus harvest were provided in the cities, for the country lying within a convenient radius around. The government took the matter in charge, to prevent the improvident waste of the plenty that would otherwise have occurred. Perhaps exportation was forbidden. The abundance was measured at first, but at length outran computation. Scribes, supposed to be entering on their tablets the number of measures received or given out, appear in figures on ancient Egyptian monumental sculptures. This process went on seven consecutive years. Joseph's providence must have begun to seem, to many observers, excessive and unnecessary.

Verses 50, 51, 52.—Manasseh. Meaning, "Who makes forget." Forgetting his father's house, no doubt meant for Joseph, forgetting his home-sick longing for it. This blessing Joseph piously attributed to God as the author. Ephraim. Double fruitfulness.

Verses 53, 54.—Dearth. Famine, destitution of food. In all lands. The causes of the short harvests seem to have been general, and not local. Egypt suffered, but her garnered surplus supplied her needs.

Verse 55.—See chapter xlvii. 13-20, where what is hinted in this and the following verse, is more fully set forth. Was famished. The people, having consumed the insufficient product of the year, together with what surplus private providence might have accumulated, began to feel the pinch of want. They went to the king, clamoring for food. The king had one reply to his hungering people: "Go to Joseph, and do as he bids you." Joseph must have been in higher credit than ever, with both monarch and subject.

Verse 56.—This verse states over again the wide prevalence of the famine. No doubt, the applications that kept coming to Egypt from distant parts for food, constantly renewed the impression of the distressed state of the world. Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold. Probably these government granaries had been filled with grain bought

up by Joseph for the crown, at low rates, during the seven years of plentiful harvests. Joseph now sold the accumulated supplies, until the people parted with everything that they possessed, and, at last, even with their own liberty, to buy the necessities of life. The gain to the wealth and power of the crown, was enormous. Examine chapter xlvii, where the expression, "The famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt," finds striking commentary.

Verse 57.—The reigning dynasty of Egypt not only profited by increase of wealth and power at home, but by spread of influence abroad. Joseph too, himself, became daily a more and more important personage; for the resort was still to him.

Joseph, in his inexperienced young manhood, was more severely tried in character by the immense prosperity that now suddenly came on him in floods, than he had been by his previous adversity.

Joseph, so early deprived of his home, must, in that home, have enjoyed the advantage of much religious instruction and example, in order to maintain his confidence unshaken in Jehovah amid the universal idolatry that surrounded him. His worldly prosperity resulted from his spiritual fidelity.

This intervening grace of God was not for Joseph's sake only, or chiefly; but for the sake of a world to be redeemed by Christ, for whose coming Joseph's history was a partial preparation.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

The story of the lesson may be told in five parts or pictures. FIRST. Joseph still in prison, through two more years of faithful helpfulness, and patient waiting. It seems dark to us, but the light, "God was with him," still shone brightly on him. Then a hasty order to come before the king, and a hurried putting off of prison dress, etc. SECOND. Joseph before the king. The telling of the dreams and their explanation, Joseph's advice to the king, Pharaoh's gratitude shown by the putting on of the ring, the dress, the chain, etc. THIRD. Joseph's honors. Riding in the chariot, the runners ahead crying, "Bow the knee." FOURTH. The years of plenty. The unusual quantity of corn and wheat. The people might have wasted it, but for Joseph's wisdom, faithfulness, and diligence. His new honors had not made him idle or unfaithful. Jesus says, "He who is faithful over a few things, shall be ruler over many things." FIFTH. The years of famine. Perhaps some had laughed at Joseph's diligence, and said there was no need of storing away the grain when there was such plenty. But now God honored his servant by proving that his words were true and wise. Joseph was Faithful, Helpful, True, and Patient.

God says, "Them that honor me, I will honor." And Joseph showed, by every action, how much he honored God, and so God honored him. He honored God by being faithful and diligent, and God made all that he did to prosper.

If children honor God by being humble, faithful, diligent in what he gives them to do, he will honor them by bringing them to stand before the King of kings, and inviting them to come in and share his beautiful home.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Booth's Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 97.

Hear our story, and believe— We are sisters, old as Eve; Sisters, not of Adam's race Yet we all his sons embrace. We were both in Eden born, On the same unhappy morn; To God's law we trace our birth, Bearing rule o'er all the earth; We begin man's mortal life, Fill his days with toil and strife, We inflame his heart with lust, Then we bring him to the dust; Evermore his steps attend, Ready his sad days to end! One alone our power could quell, Rescue ruined souls from hell; He, the everlasting King, Robbed us of our strength and sting; And He will—the seers have said— Strike us both for ever dead! Now can our young readers tell, What we are and where we dwell?

CURIOUS QUESTIONS. No. 128.

A FLOWERY ACROSTIC.

An isle renowned in ancient days; And whence the monk goes when he prays; At one's command what did the sun? What follows when time's race is run?

TRANSLITERATIONS.

Change Corn to Meal. Change Malt to Beer. Change Sill to Beam. Change Beam to Roof.

130. Of the following described words from a diamond of words:

- 1. The first letter of a meal. 2. The gathering together of waters. 3. Tall trees. 4. An ancient city in Palestine. 5. An ingenious instrument. 6. An ancient wine-vessel. 7. A warehouse. 8. A medical term of quantity. 9. The middle of a meal.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 96.

Y oke, Word, E li, I saac, T roas, H azael, A ble, R ome, A dmab, E ve, B enjamin, P atos, O badiab, R euben, U riah, I turea, G alio, C orinth, H ermon, E nemy, T abitha,

YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.

"When will Teacher Come?"

"Mother, when will teacher come?" The voice was low and plaintive, and the tone indicative of a slight suspicion of doubt whether teacher would come at all. The questioner was a boy of thirteen summers, and it was made from a bed of suffering. The room in which the boy lay, bore all the tokens of poverty. His bed would have more properly been designated a box; there were no curtains to it, and the thin patchwork coverlet was a mass of indistinguishable dirty colors. Two pieces of carpet, faded and worn beyond recognition, lay, one before the bed, and the other before the fire, doing service as hearth-rug. The walls, which once had been whitewashed, were begrimed with smoke and tapestried with cobwebs. A wretched German engraving of Christ on the cross hung in a glass frame over the fire-place, and an ostrich egg swung from a hook in the ceiling. A rickety table stood in the middle of the room, with a sad medley of pots, unwashed dishes, and crumbs of bread heaped upon it. A large seaman's chest stood against one wall, and the only chair in the room was placed near the window, and was at this time filled with the portly dimensions of the boy's mother. In a word, all was squalor and wretchedness, and the only bright thing in the room was the fire, which blazed and cracked in the grate as cheerily as if it had been in the mansion of a king. It was Sunday afternoon in a wet November; the rain poured down in torrents, rattled against the window-panes, and swelled the channels of the street to the dimensions of brooks, and, added to it, all the fog of a smoky town had shut out the blue of the sky.

The sick boy had turned from side to side during the monotonous, weary hours of Sunday, and as a relief to his mind had asked his mother to read from his school hymn-book. For this purpose she had seated herself at the window, and, spectacles on nose, was slowly and laboriously spelling out the words, when she was ever and anon interrupted by the low, plaintive cry, "Mother, will teacher come? When will he come, mother?"

For three Sundays he had been absent from school, struck down by that enemy of the young, consumption, and his teacher had seemingly taken no notice of his absence. Day after day he expected a visit from the young man his teacher, in whom he had placed implicit faith, although the teacher seemed to have good cause to doubt it, but no visitor came, and his heart was growing heavier and heavier. What a gleam of sunshine his face would have brought into that dismal room! and how pleased he would have been to come! but he did not think, did not inquire if there was any good reason for his scholar's absence!—took it for granted, in fact, that he was only playing truant, and would return soon.

"Mother, when will teacher come?"

cried the boy more plaintively than before.

"Law! Louis, what a boy you be! How should I know?" cried his mother, without taking her eyes off the book, and then went to the next hymn,—

"Rock of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee; Let—"

"Mother, what does 'Rock of Ages' mean?"

"Why, a rock that's lived for ages, to be sure," said the mother snappishly, for she did not like to be interrupted, and resumed her reading.

"Let the water and the blood."

"But, mother, it says, 'cleft for me.' What does 'cleft for me' mean?"

"Law! do yer think yer mother a dictionary? How should I know?"

"Oh dear! I wish teacher would come—he would soon tell me."

"Lie quiet, Louis, and don't interrupt me again."

"Let the water—"

"Mother, please don't read that hymn. I don't know what it means. Read 'I think when I read!'"

With a growl his mother advances to the bed, and giving him the book, says, "Find it, then. But I don't see what good it is readin' all them hymns."

The place was soon found, for it was the boy's favorite, and his mother resumed her reading. When she came to—

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my head, That His arms had been thrown around me,"

he gave a great sigh, but did not interrupt her until she came to the words—

"Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,"

then he hastily asked, "Mother, what's His 'footstool?'" But before she could reply he suddenly called out, "Hark, mother! they're singin'!"

"Who's singin', boy?"

"The school; it's their last hymn. I can hear it;" and then he joined in the song with his sweet, rich voice.

"Canaan, bright Canaan, the glorious land of Canaan."

Exhausted by the effort, he fell back on the bed and was silent for a space, the twilight having by this time stole into the room. Thinking she heard him call, she advanced to the bedside and listened.

"Take Louis to Canaan," pleaded the voice, "he wants to go there; there's bright flowers there, there's harps and crowns, and teacher says there's no wooden legs there, and no coughs, nor nothin' o' them things. And if you don't mind, Lord, bring mother there too; and may she not have so much washing to do, it makes her so tired and cross. Bless teacher, Lord—I wish you'd have sent him or he'd have come, but p'rhaps he's got a cough or a broken leg; and may his other boys be better than me."

O Lord, I can't say more. Amen." The boy then seemed to fall asleep, and with more tender feeling than she had shown since he fell ill, his mother glided back to her seat by the window, where in the darkness she fell asleep also.

When she awoke, she lighted the candle and went to look at her sleeping boy. The vision startled her—he was in the land of Canaan.—S. S. Weekly.

A young lady was speaking to a friend who had called upon her, regarding a trait characteristic of her mother, who always had a good word to say for every one. "Why," she said, "I believe if Satan were under discussion, mother would have a good word to say for him."

Just then the mother entered and was informed what the daughter had said, whereupon she quietly said: "Well, my dear, I think we might all imitate Satan's perseverance."

The authorities of Weimar are evidently a very considerate body. They have recently decreed that no person shall in any house within their jurisdiction play a piano while the windows of the house are open, under a penalty of two shillings.

No doubt of it.—"Do you really believe that an ass ever spoke to Balaam?" queried a man who prided himself on his intellect. Coleridge, to whom the question was put, reflected: "My friend, I have no doubt whatever that the story is true. I have been spoken to in the same way myself." The man of the inquiring mind retired for meditation.