

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson V.—OCTOBER 31.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

Gen. xxxvii. 1-5, 23-36.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 32-35.

Jacob and Esau were reconciled, and Jacob settled at Shelem, a city of Shechem. His family gave him much trouble. He finally settled in Bethel; Rachel died; he then removed to Hebron, where his father died, and where he dwelt when the events of this lesson occurred.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Who is able to stand before envy?"—Proverbs xxvii. 4.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Joseph Sold into Egypt, Gen. xxxvii. 1-5, 23-36.
T. Dreams and Plots, Gen. xxxvii. 5-22.
W. God's Beloved Son, Matt. iii. 13-17.
T. The Beloved Son Slain, Luke xx. 9-18.
F. Hated of the World, John xv. 18-27.
S. Jesus Sold, Luke xxii. 1-6, 47-54.
S. Jesus Bewailed, Luke xxiii. 20-26, 44-49.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 1: Gen. xvii. 8; Heb. xi. 9.
With vs. 2: 1 Sam. ii. 22, 23.
With vs. 3: Matt. iii. 17; xviii. 5; Mark i. 11; ix. 7; Luke iii. 22; ix. 35; xx. 13; 2 Pet. i. 17; Matt. xii. 18.
With vs. 4: Gen. xxvii. 41; xlix. 23.
With vs. 25; Prov. xxx. 20; Amos vi. 6; Jer. viii. 22.
With vs. 26: Gen. iv. 10; Job xvi. 18.
With vs. 27: 1 Sam. xviii. 17; Gen. xlii. 21; xxix. 14.
With vs. 28: Judges vi. 3; Gen. xlv. 4, 5; Acts vii. 9; Matt. xxvii. 9.
With vs. 29: Job i. 20.
With vs. 30: Gen. xlii. 13, 36; Jer. xxxi. 15.
With vs. 33: Gen. xlv. 48.
With vs. 34: 2 Sam. iii. 31.
With vs. 35: 2 Sam. xii. 17; Gen. xlii. 38; xlv. 29, 31.
With vs. 36: Gen. xxxix. 1.

THE BELOVED SON IN AFFLICTION.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Son Beloved, Vss. 1-4. II. The Son Hated, Vss. 5, 23, 24. III. The Son Sold, Vss. 25-28, 36. IV. The Son Lamented, Vss. 29-35.

QUESTIONS.—How many brothers had Joseph? (Gen. xxxv. 23-26.) Where did his father live at the time of the lesson? (Vs. 1.) How old was Joseph then? (Vs. 2.)

I. Vss. 1-4.—More than whom did Israel love Joseph? For what reason? How did he show his partiality? Did others observe it? Was Israel's course a wise one?

II. Vss. 4, 5, 23, 24.—What conduct of Joseph pre-disposed his brothers to hate him? (Vs. 2.) What developed their hatred? (Vs. 4, 5.) How did they show their hatred?

III. Vss. 25-28, 36.—To whom was Joseph first sold? To whom afterward? How did the selling of him come about? For how much was he sold? For how much was Jesus sold? (Matt. xxvi. 15.)

IV. Vss. 29-35.—Who first lamented for Joseph? In what scheme was Reuben disappointed? (Vs. 21, 22.) Who next lamented for him? What aroused his grief? How did he express it? How did he meet the efforts to comfort him? In what is this lament like that in 2 Sam. xviii. 33? In what unlike it? Read John iii. 16.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 1.—This verse takes up again a history that has been interrupted from chap. xxxv. 27. Was a stranger. That is, dwelt as a sojourner, instead of a resident. Both Abraham and Isaac had done this.

Verse 2.—Generations. Family history. And the lad was. Some translate thus: "And he was a lad with," etc. Joseph occupied the position of assistant to the persons named. According to the suggested rendering, this is the sense of the word "lad" here. Compare verses 12, 13, 14. Their evil report. "Evil report concerning them."

Verses 3, 4.—A coat of many colors. Omit "many." "A full-length garment," Dr. Conant translates. This is explained to be a garment flowing to the feet, and with sleeves covering the arms down to the wrists. Such a dress was, of course, unsuited to active employments, and it seemed to indicate

wealth and rank in the wearer. The ordinary dress was much shorter. Jacob's fond favoritism toward Joseph was well calculated to excite the jealousy of his older brothers.

Verse 5.—Joseph's dream is related in verses 6, 7.

Verse 23.—Joseph had been dispatched by his father to visit his brethren, where they were grazing their flocks at a distance, and so to bring him word of them. The hateful full-length garment on the youngest brother, excited the evil passions of the rest.

Verse 24.—A pit. The pit agreed upon among the conspiring brothers—one of the two cisterns which gave its name to Dothan, a very rich grazing region, where they were pasturing their flocks. The cistern was, at this time, dry.

Verse 25.—And they sat down to eat bread. A melancholy meal—unblessed of God. Dothar, where this occurred, was on the great caravan-route leading from Damascus to Egypt—a route likely to be taken by a company traveling from Northern Gilead. Spicery and balm and myrrh. More specifically, "Tragacanth, and balsam, and ladanum." Precious gums, among the most valued products of the region. (Compare chap. xliii. 11. See also Jer. viii. 22; xvi. 11.) This notice affords us a suggestive glimpse of the ancient life of that part of the East.

Verses 26, 27.—Judah said. Judah seems to have relented toward Joseph. He regarded the throwing of the youth into the empty cistern as equivalent to killing him, though without the shedding of his blood. He was, apparently, not in the secret of Reuben's purpose to rescue Joseph. Were content—agreed to the plan.

Verse 28.—And they drew. The antecedent of "they" is indefinite, but it probably is the brothers. It might possibly be the Midianites; but, by comparison of the following references, namely, vs. 27, vs. 36, chap. xl. 15, chap. xlv. 5, it will appear most probable that the Midianites were part of the caravan which was composed principally of Ishmaelites, and that the brothers were the sellers of Joseph. Reuben appears not to have been present. Sold. Into slavery, of course. Twenty pieces of silver. Compare Lev. xxvii. 5.

Verses 29, 30.—Reuben's return to the pit was probably in prosecution of his purpose to rescue Joseph. Rent his clothes. This was, and is, in the East, a customary action to express violent, painful emotion. See vs. 34; chap. xlv. 13; Num. xiv. 6; Josh. vii. 6. Reuben felt that he could not go to his father without Joseph.

Verses 31, 32, 33.—The brothers device was plausible. It succeeded; and Joseph was mourned by his father as dead—the victim of some beast of prey. Sackcloth. A coarse fabric of goat's hair, dark in color, and worn as an emblem of mourning, or of self-abasement. 2 Sam. iii. 31; 1 Kings xx. 31; xxi. 27.

Verse 35.—Into the grave. "To the underworld." The abode of departed spirits, conceived of as underneath the earth. Jacob's life was a life of many troubles. His practice of duplicity did not bring him real happiness. He stands as much in contrast with Abraham and with Isaac in fortune, as in character.

Verse 36.—The Midianites found a purchaser of high rank for their young captive, who, no doubt, had impressed them during their journey with a sense of his exceptional value.

Note the injurious effect of parental partiality.

Observe the legitimate result in crime of the sentiments of jealousy and hatred indulged.

The brother's plot against Joseph, overreaches itself, and is made by Divine Providence to bring about the very results against which its devices are contrived.

Learn from this lesson to understand, and to live by, the Thirty-ninth Psalm.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Jacob loved God very much, but his home was not a happy one. Years before, he had made his father's home unhappy; he had deceived his father, and made his brother angry, and been obliged to leave his mother in sorrow.

Now his sons deceived him, quarreled, and did wicked things.

Joseph was bound in chains as a slave, but the brothers were bound in the far heavier chains of sin. Just as a chain is made of many links, each one making it stronger and heavier, so they added one sin to another.

These very sins, that seem so hateful in others, are often in our own hearts. The first link was ENVY. Take care you don't let that feeling grow. See what it led Joseph's brothers to do. Think of Cain, and of how the Jews treated Jesus, for envy.

The next link is SULLENNESS. They could not speak peaceably; that is, not only that they spoke angrily, but that often they would not speak at all; they would not salute their brother with "Peace be unto you."

The next is HATRED. Ah! That is too dreadful to talk about.

Then CRUELTY. No doubt they had often been cruel to their brother before. Now they not only throw him in the pit, but, as before, they would not speak. Now they would not hear when he cried, and sat down to eat their dinner as if nothing had happened.

Then MURDER. You think perhaps that they only sold Joseph. The Bible says, "He that hateth his brother, is a murderer." And their intention was to leave him there to die horribly of hunger and thirst, under the hot sun.

LYING. Never try to cover a fault by lying about it? "He who does one fault at first, and lies to hide it, makes it two."

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Booth's Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 95.

TRIPLE ACROSTIC.

- (a) An important muscle of the body.
(b) A river in Assyria where Ezra assembled the captives who were returning from Judea, and where he proclaimed a fast.
(c) A town east of Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel with much success (last letter transposed).
(d) The god of music, poetry, etc.
(e) One who gives or bestows.

The initials downward form the name of a descendant of the royal family of Edom, who is mentioned as an adversary of Solomon.

The third letters downward form the name of an Old Testament high-priest. The finals downward form the name of a mountain north of Jerusalem. By many this mountain is thought to be the scene of Christ's transfiguration. —National Baptist.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 121. A conveyance is my first, My second we love dearly; My whole is trampled under foot, And often flogged severely.
122. Take half of what is needful for the dead, What helps the lawyers to their daily bread; Join them together, bright and clear, And drink for breakfast without fear.
123. A river in Europe my first, A measure of land is my third, My second is naught but a vowel, And my whole is a medical herb.
124. To what should be, prefix a letter, and make it nothing.
125. To a proposal, prefix a letter and make a money chest.
126. To a ship's company, prefix a letter and make a spiral inclined plane.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 94.

Esau, Benjamin, Enoch, Nazareth, Emmaus, Zachariah and Elizabeth, Rama. EBENEZER.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

FIVE WORD SQUARE.

- 116. G I A N T
I N D I A
A D D E R
N I E C E
T A R E S
117. Star, sear, seat, beat, boat, moat, moan, Moon.
118. Lord, lore, lode, lade, Lady.
119. Paper, paler, pales, poles, doles, dots, bolts, boots, Books.
120. Ride, tide, tile, tale, talk, walk.

A white garment appears worse with slight soiling than do colored garments when much soiled; so a little fault in a good man attracts more notice than great offences in bad men.

Being and Seeming.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG AND OLD.

"Do be quiet," said a young dove one day to his fellow nestlings. "Keep your quarrel till those people have passed by. Don't you know you've got a character to keep up? Men have a way of saying 'As gentle as a dove,' and 'Birds in their little nests agree.'" And Pearlle, the speaker, gave a satirical coo, which sounded rather like a laugh.

"I don't mind what they say," said Duskie, hotly. "I don't see why Ruffie should take up so much room; I can't stir a claw, and all my feathers which I smoothed so beautifully this morning are turned up the wrong way." And Duskie gave Ruffie a peck which Ruffie returned.

"Coo, coo, coo, coo!" said Pearlle, sweetly, trying to keep up the character of the family as the two girls came by again. They were walking up and down learning their lessons.

"Do hear those sweet creatures," said one.

"What gentle voices they have," said Mary. "They always live in peace, I am sure."

"Of course," said Jenny, "but they seem to be fluttering in their nests." Pearlle made grimaces at Duskie and Ruffie to keep quiet, but in vain; peck followed peck, and flutter followed flutter, till there was nothing to be done but to leave the nests and have it out in the air.

And so they did, and Mary and Jenny watched them with tearful eyes, for it seemed truly sad to see those pretty, soft, and graceful birds fighting.

At last the parent birds came back, and administered sharp correction to the naughty young ones.

"Duskie," said the father, "it ought to make you gentle to know it is expected of you to be 'as gentle as a dove.' And, Ruffie, you ought to be ashamed to have the character of being gentle and peaceful, and not to deserve it."

"Yes, indeed!" said Pearlle, indignantly, "and if you had only seen how those saucy sparrows laughed! they enjoyed your disgrace, and said something which I did not understand about profession and practice."

"Yes, dear, those are long words used by men, and they mean that we ought to be what we seem to be, or what we have the character of being."

"Ruffie, go outside the nest and smooth yourself, you naughty bird!" said the mother, "you look positively ugly. And, Duskie, you and your brother must not go to the pea field for a week. It is not only the harm you do to yourselves by being angry, but the harm you do to others."

"Why, those sparrows will make a mock at goodness always now, and you will find they will say, 'Oh, doves put on a meek and gentle manner, but they know how to fight and quarrel as well as others.' And those two dear little girls we met were crying, and I heard one say to the other, 'How sad! it seems worse to see doves fight than other birds. They look as if God meant them to teach us a lesson about the beauty of gentleness, and meekness, and innocence. I shall never see doves again without a painful feeling.'"

"Did she say that?" said Duskie, in a cloying voice. "That's worse than all; I thought it didn't matter much just being naughty once. But if she will never forget it, it has done her harm too; and she is such a dear little girl: she often throws me peas."

"Ah, Duskie! you can never be naughty without hurting others, and you never know how much harm you do. Besides, you cannot undo what you have done. But now go to sleep; I am tired and sorry, and so sadly disappointed."

"Coo, coo, coo, coo!" came from the tree. "Coo, coo, coo!" and those who could recognize the slight modulations of the coos, and who could understand what they expressed, would have discovered affection and penitence in Duskie and Ruffie's "coos," and tenderness and forgiveness in those of the parent birds.—Little Folks.

It is not for me to determine whether the danger to the Gospel be greater or less by my life or death. The truth of God is a rock of fear, placed for the falling and rising of many in Israel.

An ability and an opportunity to do good ought to be considered as a call to do it.

"Bill, the Banker."

The annals of the poor are short and simple. They record, however, heroic deeds. One of these records tells how a poor navy became a hero by forgetting self, even when death was clutching him.

Years ago, when England was digging canals, the laborer who delved therein was called a navy. The name, an abridgement of navigator, connected in the public mind the digger with works for internal navigation. In course of time it came to designate a laborer on railroads and other public works.

This navy was called "Bill, the banker," because his usual post was at the top of a forming embankment, among the tip carts.

He was a "top-man" over a shaft of a tunnel which was being cut on a railway. The shaft was 200 feet deep, and ran down through solid rock.

Bill's duty was to watch the large iron bucket filled with rocks, as it was hoisted from the bottom, run it to the tip-cart, and return it empty to the navvys below.

If a rock fell off the bucket, Bill shouted, "Waur out below?" and the men ran farther into the dive.

One day, as Bill was leaning over the shaft, swinging in a loaded bucket, his foot slipped, and he fell into the shaft. He knew he would be dashed to a jelly; but he thought of his mates below.

If he screamed they would rush out to learn the cause of the unusual noise, and some of them would be smashed by his heavy body.

If any of them were at the bottom, and he did not give the usual warning they would be killed.

His mates heard one moment his clear voice, "Waur out below!" the next, the thud of his smashed body. They were saved.

"Bill, the banker" was more than a poor, uneducated navy; he was a hero. For the essence of heroism was indicated as by the sneering Jews when they said of the crucified One, "He saved others, himself he can not save."—Exchange.

The slave-girl's tears.

A gentleman was once passing through the auction mart of a Southern slave State, when he noticed the tears of a little girl who was just going to be put up for sale. The other slaves of the same group did not seem to care about it, while each knock of the hammer made her shake. The kind man stopped to ask why she alone wept. He was told that the others were used to such things, and might be glad of a change from hard, harsh homes, but that she had been brought up with much care by a good owner, and she was terrified to think who might buy her.

The stranger asked her price. It was a great ransom, but he paid it down.

The tears fell fast on the signed parchment, which her deliverer brought to prove to her her freedom. She only looked at him with fear. She had been born a slave, and knew not what freedom meant.

When the gentleman was gone, it began to dawn upon her what freedom was. With the first breath she said, "I will follow him, I will follow him: I will serve him all my days!" and when reasoned with against it, she only cried—"He redeemed me, he redeemed me, he redeemed me!"

"And so," said the servant of Christ, who told this story in a meeting where every heart was thrilled, "let it be with you. Serve Jesus as sinners bought back with blood; and when men notice the way you serve him, the joy that is in your looks, the love that is in your tone, the freedom of your service, have one answer to give—HE REDEEMED ME!"—Missionary News.

We are hanging up pictures every day about the chamber walls of our hearts that we shall have to look at when we sit in the shadows.

Life is not done, and our Christian character is not won, so long as God has anything left for us to suffer, or anything for us to do.

A humble man, though surrounded with the scorn and reproach of the world, is still in peace, for the stability of his peace resteth not upon the world, but upon God.