

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson II.—OCTOBER 10.

JACOB AND ESAU.

Gen. xxvii. 22-40.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 38-40.

Because of Isaac's power, Abimelech made a covenant with him. In his old age he proposed to confer the Abrahamic blessing upon Esau, notwithstanding God had promised it to Jacob (Gen. xxv. 23). The result of this scheme is given in this lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."—Prov. iv. 27.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Jacob and Esau, Gen. xxvii. 22-40.
T. The Birthright Sold, Gen. xxv. 27-34.
W. Rebekah's Scheme, Gen. xxvii. 1-21.
T. Esau under Jacob, Obadiah i. 1-21.
F. Jacob Chosen, Rom. ix. 9-24.
S. Resting in God, Psa. xxxvii. 1-11.
S. Whom Jesus Blesses, Matt. v. 1-12.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 27: Hos. xiv. 6.
With vs. 28: Heb. xi. 20; Deut. xxxiii. 13, 28; 2 Sam. i. 21; Gen. xlv. 18.
With vs. 29: Gen. ix. 25; xxv. 23; xlix. 8; xii. 3; Num. xxiv. 9.
With vs. 33: Gen. xxviii. 3, 4; Rom. xi. 29.
With vs. 34: Heb. xii. 17.
With vs. 36: Gen. xxv. 26; xxv. 33.
With vs. 37: 2 Sam. iii. 14.
With vs. 38: Heb. xii. 17.
With vs. 39: Heb. xi. 20.
With vs. 40: 2 Sam. viii. 14; Ob. v. 18-20; 2 Kings viii. 20.

THE BLESSING SOUGHT BY WORKS.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Rebekah's Scheme. Vss. 22-29. II. Isaac's Scheme. Vss. 30-40.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 22-29.—From vs. 6-17, give in your own words the scheme of Rebekah to secure the blessing of Jacob. What conversation that she overheard led to this action? (Vss. 1-5.) Why did she wish the blessing for Jacob rather than for Esau? How did her scheme succeed? (Vss. 18-29.) Which of these two sons of Isaac was the younger? Which had God declared should serve the other? (Gen. xxv. 23.) How is this rulership expressed by Isaac? (Gen. xxvii. 29.)

II. Vss. 30-40.—What scheme had Isaac made? (Vss. 1-5.) Why did Isaac love Esau? (Gen. xxv. 28.) Why did not Isaac bless Esau before he went out to hunt venison? (See vs. 3, 4.) What rights as the elder had Esau naturally? (Deut. xxi. 17.) How did Esau regard his birthright? (Gen. xxv. 29-34.) What is Esau called in Heb. xii. 16? How did Isaac discover his error? (Vss. 30-33.) What appeal did Esau make? How is this commented on in Heb. xii. 17? What does Isaac declare he had done in blessing Jacob? (Vs. 37.) Was he willing to recall this blessing? For what did Esau still plead? What wrong steps did Isaac take in this case? What right steps?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 22.—Jacob had, at the prompting of his mother, entered upon a course of deception and falsehood, to secure the father's blessing, in place of his elder brother, Esau. Isaac, in his dotting old age, would seem to have suspected a deceit. He had bidden Jacob come close, that he might feel him. The old man recognized Jacob's voice, but was over-persuaded by the evidence of the hands, disguised in the skins of the kids that Jacob had slain. The Oriental camel-goat has a silky hair, said to have been "used by the Romans as an artificial substitute for the human hair."

Verse 23.—So he blessed him. "And he blessed him." That is, gave him the customary blessing suitable to a meeting. Meetings and partings were occasions of "blessing." Compare chap. xlvii. 7 and 10. Also 2 Kings iv. 29, reading for "salute," bless, which is the literal rendering of the Hebrew. Examine Ruth ii. 4.

Verses 24, 25.—Jacob, perhaps, did not at first mean to do more than act a deceit. But he finds himself now forced to tell an outright lie—or fail in his purpose. It was a shameful thing. Venison. Used in the sense of "game."

Verses 27, 28, 29.—His raiment. The clothing of Esau, furnished to Jacob by the craft of the mother. The personal odor of the owner, derived from the field and the chase, perhaps clung to them, and was discovered by the sharpened sense of the blind father. The blessing takes something of the form of poetry. Dr. Conant translates and arranges it as follows:

"See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field, Which Jehovah has blessed. And God give thee of the dew of heaven, And of the fatness of the earth. And abundance of corn and new wine. Let peoples serve thee, And nations bow down to thee. Be lord of thy brethren, And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee."

Cursed be every one that curses thee, And blessed be every one that blesses thee."

The "blessing" confers the rights and privileges of the first born upon Jacob, making him head of his family and race.

Verses 30, 31.—The closeness with which Esau's entrance follows upon Jacob's withdrawal, adds striking dramatic effect.

Verse 32.—Who art thou? Not as in verse 18, "Who art thou, my son?" The present question indicates the old man's alarm and suspicion.

Verse 33.—Who? Ought, perhaps, not to constitute a separate question, but to form the subject of the whole interrogation, thus: "Who, then, is he, etc." He shall be blessed. As if his words were beyond change or recall—having a character of inspiration and prophecy.

Verse 34.—Esau makes a figure here that certainly shows to advantage, in contrast with that of his brother. His cry of anguish is very pathetic. He does not ask to have the blessing on Jacob unsaid, but simply pleads for a blessing in addition on himself.

Verses 35, 36.—Jacob. "Supplanter." Esau thought his brother merited his name. The disappointed son makes yet another appeal to his father. It is still a blessing, not the blessing, that he craves.

Verse 37.—What shall I do now unto thee, my son? Better, probably, "And now, what can I do for thee, my son?"

Verse 38.—Esau does not attempt to deprive Jacob of his blessing, but presses his suit only for a blessing in companionship with him. The son's passionate grief and entreaty are too much for the father to resist. Compare Heb. xii. 16, 17.

Verses 39, 40.—Isaac here, as in blessing Jacob, breaks out into poetical expression. Dr. Conant's version and arrangement are as follows:

"Behold, from the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling, And from the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword thou shalt live, And thy brother shalt thou serve, And it shall be, as thou rovest at will, Thou wilt break his yoke from off thy neck."

The meaning here is, that Esau's dwelling shall be [removed] from the fatness of the earth, and from the dew of heaven. Instead of his being sustained by the fruits of the soil, he shall live by the sword: The traits of this prophecy accord with the history and the geographical circumstances of Esau's descendants. Compare Malachi i. 3.

Divine Revelation makes no concealments of the sins of good men.

The Bible is notwithstanding always, and everywhere, and only, and strongly, felt to be on the side of virtue.

Esau had no more right to the blessing that he lost, than had Jacob to the blessing that he gained.

Jacob suffered heavily, in consequence of his deceit.

Jacob, notwithstanding his faults, was a pious man; while Esau, notwithstanding his good points, was a profane man.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Explain what the birth-right was. Now every child of a family is treated alike; but these oldest sons had special rights which they valued very much. There was the promise of a Saviour which belonged to Isaac's eldest son. Esau despised the promise; he had no faith in it; did not value it; he cared more for the present minute than for all the time to come. Jacob cared for it, but had not faith enough to know

that God could manage without his help.

Talk of bad bargains. Esau made a bad bargain when he sold his birth-right. Judas made a bad bargain when he sold the Saviour; every one makes a bad bargain who, to gain the world, loses his soul. We shall see in many of our lessons how this punishment, for his deceit, followed Jacob all his life.

Our Heavenly Father has many blessings, he is willing to forgive all the deceitful, disobedient things we have done, if we only come and ask him before it is too late. Come now and pray: "Bless me, even me, also, O my Father."—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 92.

- 1. What king of Judah tribute paid to an Assyrian king?
2. Who for deception, on himself did swift destruction bring?
3. Whose grandson, to the Hebrews, proved a leader great and wise?
4. Where, when the strong man drooped with thirst, did springs of water rise?
5. Who for two talents bought a hill and built Samaria?
6. As co-existent with our God, what title bears the Son?
7. Who, with strong cords, a prophet from a filthy dungeon drew?
8. Who slew of priests fourscore and more, and spoiled their city, too?
9. What surname gave our Saviour to the sons of Zebedee?
10. Whose pleadings from destruction set herself and nation free?
11. What city in the wilderness was builded by a king?
12. Who one rebuilt and, as foretold, thus felt the curse's sting?
13. What does the Scriptures say it is good to bear in youth?
14. Who dared reprove a guilty king in words of plainest truth?
15. A good man's sufferings and a dearth, what prophet did foretell?
16. What calls the Psalmist "angel's food" and "corn of heaven," as well?
17. From what city was the captive ark restored to its own place?
This petition from the Bible should ascend from all our race. —Selected.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 104. Of whom is it said, "He shall be driven out of the world." Where is it found?
105. Of what one thing is it said, Jesus knew not?
106. A wall is said to have fallen on 27000 men. Whowere they? and Where was it?
107. What was the first name of the good Barrabas, and in what British possession did he live?

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 91.

- 1. S event y...2 Kings x. 1, 7.
2. A she r...Gen. xxx. 13.
3. M ill o...Judges ix. 6-20.
4. U njus t...2 Pet. ii. 9.
5. E phesu s...Acts xix. 35.
6. L eh i...Judges xv. 14, 15.
7. A zaria h...Dan. i. 6.
8. N icopoli s...Titus iii. 12.
9. D eue l...Num. i. 14.
10. K nif e...Gen. xxii. 10.
11. I tura a...Luke iii. 1.
12. N ebuchadnezza r...Dan. ii. 38.
13. G enesi s...Chap. 49.
14. S ibbecha i...2 Sam. xxi. 18.

SAMUEL AND KINGS—ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 94. Samuel. 1 Sam. vii. 12.
95. Meshah. 2 Kings iii. 4, 26, 27.
96. Elhanan. 1 Chron. xx. 5.
97. Shimei. 1 Chron. iv. 27.
98. BEHARDINGS. Clover, lover.
99. Plover, lover, over.
100. CURTAILINGS. Clover, clove.
101. Bittern, bitter, 102. Bite, bit.
102. Wary, war. 103. Covet, cove.

The Two Brides.

I saw two maids at the kirk, And both were fair and sweet— One in her wedding robe, And one in her winding sheet.

The choristers sang the hymn, The sacred rites were read! And one for life to Life, And one to Death was wed.

They were borne to their bridal beds In loveliness and bloom— One in a flery castle, And one in a solemn tomb.

One on the morrow woke, In a world of sin and pain, But the other was happier far, And never awoke again.

R. H. STODDARD.

How love removed a mountain.

"Mamma," said Arthur, "how can faith remove mountains?"

"I will tell you how love once removed a mountain," said his mother, "and then you will perhaps understand what is now puzzling you."

"More than a hundred and twenty years ago, there was born in an old castle on the shores of the Pentland Firth, in the far north of Scotland, a boy who when he grew up, became a very useful man. His mother was one of a noble family, and he inherited a title himself. He was Sir John Sinclair; but better far than titles and wealth was the training the mother gave her son. She taught him—for his father died when he was young—how to manage wisely his estates; and as he grew up he showed that he did not intend to live a selfish, luxurious life, but to do his best for his neighbors and his country. At that time good roads were very much needed, even in the more busy parts of England; and in the north of Scotland, where the inhabitants were few, and for the most part poor, the roads were often very bad.

"One day a neighbor asked Sir John when he would make a road over Ben Cheilt—a large mountain which interfered much with freedom of travelling in Caithness. He was not prepared to begin a road over Ben Cheilt just then, but the time came soon after. He went to London on a visit, and there saw a young lady whom he wished to marry, but when he asked her to go with him to Caithness, she shook her head. She liked Sir John; but in those days of slow traveling and dear postage, the distance between Thurso and London seemed immense, and Miss Maitland could not make up her mind to go so far from home. However, she did not altogether refuse him, and he went back to Thurso, resolved that the big mountain, Ben Cheilt, should no longer stand in the way of a direct road to the south. He surveyed it carefully, made up his mind what to do, and then sent out over the country for all the men that could be got to help him. One summer's morning, at early dawn, one thousand two hundred and sixty men assembled under his command, and by nightfall the old bridge-track was made into a carriage-road. Before he could go south again, a gentleman who had just been traveling in Scotland, carried to Miss Maitland the story of Sir John's road-making, and all his other improvements, and she was so much pleased that she determined to reward him in the way he wished. They were married soon afterwards.

"That was not Sir John's only effort. He lived to be an old man, to do a good deal for Scotland, and to be much respected. And now, Arthur, you see how love can remove mountains."

"He didn't remove it, mamma; he only made a way over it," said Arthur.

"But what more was needed?" answered his mamma. "God does not take mountains out of our way altogether, in this world, my dear; but if we love and trust him, he will give us the strength and patience to make a way over them; and that is better."—Early Days.

Helps the Boys to like it.

The splendid rewards brought to the farmers during the past three years, are doing more than all the preaching to keep the boys on the farm. Our idea is that this state of affairs ought to be improved by the farmers, and by those interested in the prosperity of the young, to fix the boys' choice of farming, and to teach them their business. And the shortest statement of the way to do it, according to our observation, is to make them like it. There are as many different ways to do this as there are boys to be influenced; but it may safely be said that any boy whose tastes, inclinations, ambitions and abilities lie in the direction of farming, can the most surely be kept at his vocation by rendering his apprenticeship to it as pleasant and hopeful as possible.

The wheels of this generation will not run in the ruts of the last one; too many farmers forget this. The conditions of successful farming have greatly changed within fifty years. Markets and transportation have worked many modifications. Improved breeds of animals, perfected fruits, grain, farm ma-

chinery and commercial fertilizers, the classification of the different branches into specialities—all these have made it necessary for the young farmers to know a good deal more than sufficed for their fathers. And this knowledge must come from books, schools, farm journals, observation and experiments. The boy, therefore, should be permitted and encouraged to learn his business, that he may respect and succeed in it.—Golden Rule.

The game of Fagot-gathering.

There is a jolly in-door game for the winter called "Fagot-Gathering," which has been described in print before, but it makes so much fun that many who have never heard of it will be glad if we tell about it here.

First, you take some slips of paper, as many as there are players, and on one of them you write "Fagot-gatherer;" on each of the rest you write either "good wood" or "snapper," making three times as many "good woods" as "snappers." Of course, anybody who knows about wood fires will see that this is because some sticks will burn quietly and brightly, while others will crack and snap and fly without the least warning. You put the papers into a hat, and each player takes one, telling nobody what is written on it. Every one then sits as near to the walls as possible, leaving a clear space in the middle of the room, and the player who has chosen the "Fagot-Gatherer" slip proceeds in a serious, business like way to bundle the fagots. He or she chooses four or five girls and boys, standing them together to represent a fagot, and then makes similar groups of the rest in other parts of the room. This done he begins to "bind the fagots" by walking slowly around each group, making with his arms such motions as a real fagot-binder would make. The "stickers" are quiet until the binder lets his arms fall, but then comes a sudden change; the "good woods" run to their seats, but the "snappers" chase the "binder," and try to touch him before he can begin to bind another "fagot;" failing in this, they have to go and mourn among the "good woods." Then the binding of the second "fagot" goes on, like that of the first. But when a "fagot gatherer" is touched, the "snapper" takes the place of the "gatherer," who goes and rests himself. The game ends when all the "fagots" have been used up in this way, and is then begun again by another selection of papers from the hat. The fun is in the frights and surprises of the "fagot-gatherer," who, of course, does not know who is a "good wood" and who a "snapper;" and all do their best to avoid betraying themselves. If you have a good big room and lots of players, you will find this game as full of fun as you can wish.—St. Nicholas.

Saved by an Orang-outang.

A nobleman had a favorite monkey, a large orang-outang, which you know is the largest species of monkey except the gorilla. This monkey was very much attached to his master, and to the baby boy who was the pet of the whole family.

One day, suddenly a fire broke out in the house, and everybody was running here and there to put it out, while the little boy in his nursery was almost forgotten; and when they thought of him, the stair case was all in flames! What could be done? As they were looking up and wondering, a large hairy hand and arm opened the window, and presently the monkey appeared with the baby in his arms, and carefully climbed down over the porch and brought the child safely to his nurse. Nobody else could have done it, for a man cannot climb like a monkey and is not nearly so strong. You may imagine how the faithful creature was praised and petted after that! This is a true story, and the child who was saved was the young Marquis of Kildare.—Children's Treasury.

Philadelphia has the largest number of churches of any of the large cities in the United States—434; New York comes next with 354; Brooklyn follows with 240, and all other cities have less than 200 each. Boston has one church to 1,450 inhabitants; New York, one to 2,500; Buffalo, one to 1,675; Cleveland, one to 1,450; Cincinnati, one to 1,600; Providence has one to 1,300.