

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson III.—OCTOBER 17.

JACOB AT BETHEL.

Gen. xxviii. 10-22.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 12-16.

Esau hated Jacob as one supplanting him, and threatened his life. Isaac and Rebekah therefore sent Jacob to Padan-aram to her kindred, that he, like his father, might there secure a wife. At the outset of his journey, the events of this lesson occurred.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest"—Gen. xxviii. 15.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 10-22.
T. Jacob Hated of Esau, Gen. xxvii. 41-46.
W. Jacob's Exile, Gen. xxviii. 1-9.
T. Jacob at Padan-aram, Gen. xxix. 1-14.
F. The God of Jacob, Psa. xli. 1-11.
S. Heaven Open, John i. 43-51.
S. Consecrated, 1 Pet. i. 13-25.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 10: Hos. xii. 12; Acts vii. 2.
With vs. 12: Gen. xli. 1; Job xxxiii. 15; John i. 51; Heb. i. 14.
With vs. 13: Gen. xxxv. 1; xlviii. 3; xxvi. 24; xlii. 15; xxxv. 12.
With vs. 14: Gen. xlii. 16; xliii. 14; xli. 3; xxii. 18; Deut. xii. 20.
With vs. 15: Gen. xxxi. 3; xxxv. 6; xlviii. 16; Psa. cxxi. 5, 7, 8; Deut. xxxi. 6, 8; Josh. i. 5; Num. xxiii. 19.
With vs. 16: Ex. iii. 5; Josh. v. 15.
With vs. 18: Gen. xxxi. 13, 45; xxxv. 14; Lev. viii. 10-12; Num. vii. 1.
With vs. 19: Judges i. 23, 26; Hos. iv. 15.
With vs. 20: Judges xi. 30; 2 Sam. xv. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 8.
With vs. 21: Judges xi. 31; 2 Sam. xix. 24, 30; Deut. xxvi. 17; 2 Kings v. 17.
With vs. 22: Gen. xxxv. 7, 14; Lev. xxvii. 30.

THE BLESSING ASSURED IN GRACE.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Destitution, Vss. 10, 11. II. Grace, Vss. 12-15. III. Consecration, Vss. 16-22.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 10, 11.—Toward what place was Jacob journeying? From what place? To what place had he come? At what time of day did he reach this place? For how long did he propose to tarry? What arrangements for sleeping did he make? Why had he undertaken this journey? Why did Esau plot against him?

II. Vss. 12-15.—What is meant by "grace"? To what is it opposed in Rom. iv. 4? When had Jacob worked for the blessing? In what condition do we now find him? Describe Jacob's dream. What introduction of himself did the Lord make? What promise did he make about the land? By what name is this land known?

III. Vss. 16-22.—When Jacob awoke what did he say? When he arose what did he do? What effect of the dream is shown by these words and acts? What vow did he make? What three items are included in his vow? What one word covers all his vows? To what call of David may we all respond? (1 Chron. xxix. 5.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 10.—Beersheba. On the southern border of Palestine. Haran. Three or four hundred miles to the north, in Mesopotamia. Jacob's journey was a flight to escape Esau's resentment. See chap. xxvii. 43.

Verse 11.—A certain place. The word "place," here, is to be understood as implying an open ground, free to be occupied. This locality he reached, as it were, by chance.—Provisionally guided.

Verse 12.—A ladder. Or stair-case. Some suppose that certain aspects of natural scenery—rocks, or verdurous slopes, arranged in terraces, rising one above another—had impressed the imagination of the pilgrim to give shape to his visions of the night. We cannot well, however, suppose the dream here related to have been merely natural. It was, no doubt, a kind of acted parable in vision, meant to teach Jacob, and, through him, others, how earth and heaven were invisibly connected in mutual communication.

Verses 13, 14.—I am the Lord God of Abraham. "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham." Jehovah took pains thus to

identify himself with the Being that had revealed himself to Abraham and Isaac. This was necessary in order to preclude the possibility of Jacob's conceiving that his God was a different God. God here renews and continues the promise of Canaan as an inheritance to Jacob, thus recognizing in him the true successor to Abraham and Isaac. Besides this, the blessing assured to Abraham and Isaac, is now confirmed by promise to Jacob. It was in a vision; but the vision was undoubtedly from God.

Verse 15.—The promise of safety, and of eventual return, must have been very grateful to the lonely fugitive.

Verse 16.—The Lord is in this place. In this place, too, so removed from the accustomed scene of his revelation of himself.

Verse 17.—Dreadful. In the sense of awe-inspiring. The consciousness of God's presence awes, while it re-assures.

Verse 18.—A pillar. To identify and consecrate the spot. It was afterward dedicated by Jacob and his family. See chap. xxxv. 1-7. The oil was poured on the pillar as a symbol of religious consecration. Compare Ex. xxx. 26-30. Jacob probably carried oil with him, as a part of his food supply.

Verse 19.—Bethel. House of God. Such, after Jacob's time, was the name. Previously, it had been Luz.

Verses 20, 21, 22.—Jacob, here makes a grateful vow, in return for the promise received. He says, substantially: "How gracious is God! If he does this for me, then he shall be my God. I will commemorate his goodness with a monument to his praise. And I will devote a tenth of all that I receive from him to his service." This was before tithes were made obligatory.

Now Jacob begins to experience the painful consequences of his deceit.

A revelation designed in Jacob's vision, as a way of communication between earth and heaven.

The ladder seen by Jacob is a symbolism of Christ Jesus, your Redeemer, by his human nature reaching to heaven. An anticipation of the New Testament doctrine of the ministration of angels. Heb. i. 14.

Dedicate beforehand free-will offerings to God, of the gifts that he will bestow on you.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Picture the lonely traveler, with only his staff in his hand, and wallet at his back. The sun was setting; no town near; he must pass the night where he is. So he takes the hard stone for a pillow, and lays down to rest. Who is this traveler? Tell, also, why he is there, far from his father's home; and in doing so, impress the fact that he is already tasting of the sorrow which must always follow sin. Then tell of his wonderful dream, as well as his words, on waking.

Jesus has made a way to heaven for us. He himself is the way. Suppose this Christ-ladder so high above us that a child could not reach it—that is, suppose it was something that you could not do till you were old, or strong, or rich. But he has made the ladder to reach down so low that the smallest child can begin to-day to climb it, for none of you are too little to be sorry when you do wrong. You have to begin at the bottom; for no one can truly serve God without they have first repented and believed.

How strong it is. All the people in the world can try it at once. Will you not try to climb higher and higher each day. You need not be afraid of falling if you cling close to the sides. Keep fast hold of Jesus. Then you know if you are climbing a ladder, the best way to do is to keep your eye fixed on the top.

When Jacob awoke, he said: "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." Yet God was there all the time. And he was in the blind father's tent when Jacob so cruelly deceived him, and lied about it. How much sorrow Jacob would have been saved if he had thought of it then. God is always near, though, like Jacob, you see him not; let it make you afraid to sin, but let it keep you from fear of evil, and make you happy, for it was God's presence that made this place seem like the gate of heaven to Jacob.

There is no spot on earth which is not the house of God, for he does not live only in churches; "God is here."—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Booths' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 93.

CENTRAL DIAMOND PUZZLE.

- 1. Found in glory.
2. A place of refuge.
3. A title given Christ.
4. The name of a Hebrew month.
5. The name of a book in the Bible.
6. Enemies of our Saviour.
7. A city, the native place of Urijah.
8. The names of three kings of Israel.
9. Three faithful servants of God.
10. The honored of women.
11. What all true Christians are.
12. A title given our Saviour.
13. The prayer of sincerity.
14. Three things to be desired.
15. Part of Christ's sermon on the mount.
16. Condemned by Christ.
17. Enjoyed on all Christians.
18. Characteristic of saints.
19. Accomplished by Christ.
20. A valley noted for fertility.
21. An ancient weapon.
22. Where one of the faithful was cast.
23. Is found in repentance.

—Selected.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 107. BEHEAD, a garden tool, and leave a small house.
108. A bone, and leave a tree.
109. An article of small value, and leave a weapon.
110. A church dignitary, and leave to tell.
111. A bird, and leave an act of rolling on the ground.
112. Ladies, and leave a bad sign.
113. An animal, and leave a support.
114. A heavy body, and leave a number.
115. Form a Double Acrostic of frozen vapor, fear, a fruit, a form of government, an Anchorite, vessels. The answer to be—Tempests, and what they produce.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 92.

- 1. H ezeiah.
2. A nania.
3. L evi.
4. L ehi.
5. O mri.
6. W ord.
7. E bed-Melech.
8. D oeg.
9. B oanerges.
10. E sther.
11. T agmor.
12. H iel.
13. Y oke.
14. N athan.
15. A gabus.
16. M anna.
17. E kron.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 104. The wicked. Job xviii. 18.
105. Sin. 2 Cor. v. 21.
106. Syrians at Aphek. 1 Kings xx. 30.
107. Joses, of Cyprus. Acts iv. 36.

Hopeless.

A HIGHLAND STORY.

Nearly half a century ago there wandered through the Highlands of Scotland, in summer heat and winter's cold, the most wretched creature on earth.

She once had a home and loving friends, but, impelled by evil, she broke loose from all restraint, disgraced those who loved her, ruined herself, and finally became an outcast, and the terror of even those in whose company she had first gone astray. Her friends gave up all hope, and strove to bury her memory, but every now and then she would appear and open the healing wound by her excesses and boldness.

Once in a wild storm she stood at the window of her father's humble cot, and looked on the family at prayer; but the moment the old man began to pray for his "puir lost bairn" she uttered a wild cry that brought them all from their knees, and fled like the wounded victim of a hunter, and no trace could be found of her.

As the years went by, she lost the pity of the farmers and cotters, for many who had fed and sheltered her missed property on her departure. And yet all feared her, for a refusal of hospitality was always received with a low muttered curse, and not unfrequently were barns burned, and cows disabled, immediately afterward. She soon became the terror of the Highlands.

After a few years the miserable woman forsook the abodes of men, and lived far up among the heath clad hills, and was only seen occasionally by some shepherd boy, flying like the wind over the hills with a lamb or sheep across her shoulders; and after this, a smoke rising above the low fire would show where she was roasting the victim she had slain.

Muckle Bess, as she was called, had never possessed any womanly grace or beauty. She was tall, stalwart, and

masculine in appearance and voice, and now that she dressed only in the clothes that she could steal from line or barn, of woman or man, and lived almost without shelter from sun or storm, she was almost forbidding in her appearance.

It is little wonder, when the farmers' wives saw her flying over the braes, they were terror-stricken. By her bitterness, her dishonesty, and her profaneness, she had wholly separated herself from her kind. Her hand was against every man, and every man's hand against her.

One day, as an honest cotter, whose wife had known her in early days, saw her dart by his window, he spoke of it, and called her to come in and eat bread there. She looked at him an instant, and cried out, "What have I to do among pure and honest women, like Tybie? I'm awa' to my only companions—the beasts on the hills!"

That night, when honest Donald Craig gathered his wife and bairns about the family altar, Tybie said with many tears—"Oh, Donald, ye blessed of God, who has kept ye and me in love and peace, pray for ye lost wanderer, that God would bring her back to Himself!"

"No, nay, gude wife, I'll no do that; I'll feed and clothe her if I can; but I'll no weary myself, nor vex God, prayin' for her! She's o'er far gone for prayer to help her! She's cast oot o' God and man, and we must e'en place her among the hopeless."

And the elders and the ministers and all the good people said the same—"hopeless, hopeless,"—and many an honourable man in that region—honourable in the sight of man, but self-righteous in the eye of God—echoed the word "hopeless," never lifted one prayer for the outcast.

About this time, when Muckle Bess was past middle life, there was a great awakening in the Highlands. The people gathered from many parishes to hear the preaching of the godly young men whose lips had been touched with fire from God's altar, and who brought a living message from Him to the people. Such was the interest that they would linger for a whole day about the holy place, to hear what God would say to them through His servants.

On a certain Sabbath several congregations had gathered on the hillside in front of a church which could not hold a quarter of them on "the occasion," as the humble Highlanders call the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. They were seated in groups of many hundreds, with a minister to address each company.

Suddenly one of these groups was startled as if by an electric shock. Muckle Bess, in all the grotesqueness of her poverty, stood like a giant before them. The women trembled, and the men looked scornfully at her, as if to say, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Muckle Bess was no heathen! She knew the "Shorter Catechism" by heart, and was versed in many points on which Scottish theologians were then, and had always been, splitting hairs. It was well known that she often accused the minister of not being sound. "I ken what it is to be sound in the faith, although I ha' neither faith nor grace myself," but "I am cast oot o' God and man," she would say to an easy shepherd of souls, whom she met on the highway.

When she appeared where God's Spirit was so evidently at work, all thought she had come to cavil and disturb, and many a stalwart arm was held ready to put her away whenever she should attempt it.

But there she stood like a representation of the "Witch of Endor," head and shoulders above the speaker, on whom her wild eyes were firmly fixed. She did not move a muscle, but listened as if for her life.

At length a merciful woman, braver than the others, moved and made room for her on the greensward, and touched her and beckoned to her. At this unwanted civility Bess forgot herself, and called out in bitterness of spirit, "What ha' I to do wi' ye, honest Cressy Irving? I am na worthy to sit on the same grass wi'—it wad pollute ye all, gudewives and mothers. What is the glorious Gospel that the noble laddie is preaching to ye—the what is it to me? I ha' sinned awa' the day o' grace, and e'en the all-powerful blood has na power to cleanse me! Look at me, all ye lassies

o' happy homes, and see what sin has brought forth. Oh, Christ! Oh, Christ! Has it come to this, that Satan is stronger than ye? That he has given the lie to Thy word, that whosoever cometh shall in na wise be casted oot?"

Here the silence of death reigned over the company; and no one disturbed the woman in her anguish. She now ceased speaking to the people, and raising her weather-beaten face to heaven, she stretched forth her brawny hands, and cried in tones of agony that might have melted the rocks about her, "Oh, thou God of my fathers; oh, thou God o' bonnie Scotland that has been steeped in blood for Thy name's sake, look on me, a wretched sinner who has scorned Thee, and robbed Thee, and defied Thee! Hast Thee na promised cleansing to them whose sins are scarlet and crimson? And whose sins are o' deeper dye than mine? Oh, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand o' the living God!" Then exhausted by her emotions, she fell fainting to the earth; and pitiful women who had before fled at her approach now ministered to her; and fear fell on the people.

Then the minister preached of Christ as the only way of access to the Father, and set Him forth in all His glory as a mediator; and showed that he made Him a liar who doubted His power to forgive all manner of sin. He dwelt on His compassion and tenderness, till all, even the poor outcast, were melted into tears. At length Bess cried out in this most informal service, "Hear me, ye people of God! Hear me, ye angels above! Hear me, ye powers o' evil, while I vow before ye all, that I will e'en tak' Him at His word, and leave it there!"

From that time forward Muckle Bess went from farm house to cottage, from field to pasture, telling in deep solemnity what God was able to do for the chief of sinners. She had a welcome at every "ingleside," and every house where dwelt a child of God was her home. When offered work at the wheel or in the dairy, she said, "Na, na, I ha' na time for that. I must e'en be on my way telling the story."

And she told the story with streaming eyes; indeed, she was always weeping, and once when reminded that God had called His children to peace and joy, she said, "Aye, aye, that's here within the breast; but how can I ever forget that I crucified the Lord o' glory, and put Him to open shame. There is na time nor way to redeem the past. Let me, like Mary, wash His feet wi' my tears!"

Muckle Bess lived to prove the genuineness of her conversion, the re-creation of her spirit.

She who had tortured animals in revenge for the treatment of their owners, went from stall to stall, tenderly stroking the cows and horses, and binding up their wounds when they had been injured. She had become indeed a new creature!

If any doubt the truth of this story, which we had from a reliable source, let them look about them, and see if God has not saved among us just as depraved and hopeless sinners as Muckle Bess? Let us remember that Jesus has power over all things, in heaven and earth, aye, and in the dark domains of evil, and never say of any mortal sinner, "His case is hopeless."

MRS. J. H. CHAPLIN.

"Just Comfortable."

"Where's mamma?" cried blue-eyed Bessie, running breathlessly into the room the other morning. "Never mind, you'll do, aunty; I only want to know something. Is my pa rich?"

"Not very. Why?"

"O, 'cause Benny Bend and Mary Monk and Kate Kinsley are out here telling about their pas, and I didn't know about mine."

"Well, Bessie, I'll tell you. Your pa is not too rich, and not too poor; he is just comfortable."

The child stood for a moment, looking thoughtfully, then repeated over and over to herself, "Not weddy rich, not weddy poor, jest comferable," and went out.

Presently her mother came in, Bessie following her.

"Well, Bessie," said she, "have you been a good girl to-day?"

"No, mamma."

"Why, Bessie, I hope you have not been a bad girl."

"No, mamma," said the little thing.

"Not weddy bad, not weddy good, jest comferable."