

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson IV.—OCTOBER 24.

JACOB'S PREVAILING PRAYER.

Gen. xxxii. 9-12; 22-30.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 26-30.

Jacob settled in Padan-aram with his uncle Laban, whose daughters, Leah and Rachel, he married. He was greatly prospered, and, after a sojourn of twenty years, God bade him return to Canaan. On his way back, the events of this lesson occurred.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke xviii. 1.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Jacob's Prevailing Prayer, Gen. xxxii. 9-12, 22-30.
T. Parting with Laban, Gen. xxxi. 41-55.
W. The Coming of Esau, Gen. xxxii. 1-9.
T. The Present to Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 13-21.
F. The Brothers at Peace, Gen. xxxiii. 1-17.
S. New Scenes and Old, Gen. xxxv. 1-15.
S. Encouraged to Pray, Luke xviii. 1-8.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 9: Psa. l. 15; Gen. xxviii. 13; xxxi. 3-13.
With vs. 10: Gen. xxiv. 27; Job viii. 7.
With vs. 11: Psa. lix. 1, 2; Hos. x. 11.
With vs. 12: Gen. xxviii. 13, 14, 15.
With vs. 22: Deut. iii. 16.
With vs. 24: Hos. xii. 3, 4; Eph. vi. 12.
With vs. 25: Matt. xxvi. 41; 2 Cor. xii. 7.
With vs. 26: Luke xxiv. 28; Hos. xii. 4.
With vs. 28: Gen. xxxv. 10; 2 Kings xvii. 34; Gen. xxv. 31; xxvii. 33.
With vs. 29: Judges xiii. 18.
With vs. 30: Gen. xvi. 13; Ex. xxiv. 11.

THE BLESSING CONFERRED IN GRACE.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Pleading the Promises, Vss. 9-12. II. Using the Means, Vss. 22-26. III. Receiving the Blessing, Vss. 27-30.

QUESTIONS.—On what journey was Jacob when he stopped at Bethel? In whose house did he find a home? At what place? Point it out upon the map. How long did Jacob tarry there? (Gen. xxxi. 41).

I. Vss. 9-12.—What trouble was upon Jacob at this time? Why does Jacob address God as the God of his fathers? When had God bidden him to return to his country? (Gen. xxxi. 3, 13). With what confession does he follow this plea? Why was he not worthy?

II. Vss. 22-26.—Describe, in your own words, the course of Jacob, as told in vs. 13-21. What did he do at the ford Jabbok? What was the object of this wrestling?

III. Vss. 27-30.—Why was Jacob's name changed? With whom had Jacob now shown power? By what means had it been obtained? How does it illustrate the topic?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 9.—Here we have an example of the religious effect of fear. Jacob felt himself helpless, in exposure to the anger of his war-like brother, Esau. He was driven to prayer. Jacob appeals to God, by recalling the promise given him years before.

Verse 10.—Jacob exhibits a spirit very nearly like that of the later saints. His language is frequently adopted into the speech of Christians, as they pray. With my staff. With nothing but my staff. The contrast was striking between his former condition and his present. This Jordan. The sight of the stream brought back the past in vivid recollection. The thrifty adventurer had used no little worldly wisdom in his conduct of life; but he was humble enough now to attribute his prosperity to God's blessing.

Verses 11, 12.—My brother Jacob, in his prayer, betrays no sense of guilt as toward Esau. He does, however, use elaborate and costly means of disposing his brother favorably. The mother with the children. Eastern vengeance was wont not to make nice distinctions. Jacob's use of the proverb may have had reference to the promise pleaded in verse 12. How was God to fulfill that promise, should Esau involve all in a common destruction?

Verses 22, 23.—That night. Apparently, the same night as that mentioned in verse 13, and again in verse 21. The main caravan had gone over the ford previously. Passed over. Not in his own person, but in the persons of his family. Jabbok. A stream falling into the Jordan, about half-way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Its course is through the mountain-country of Gilead. If Jacob himself went over with them, he must, according to verse 24, have returned afterward to the encampment.

Verse 24.—Alone. It was natural that the responsible head of the company should wish to be the last to leave the camping-ground; that he might see everything properly sent forward. A man. The appearance was as of a human being. The occurrence here related may have been a dream, though there is nothing said to indicate this. The remarkable indefiniteness of the narrative would be accounted for, if we could suppose the occurrence to have been a vision. Verse 31 is, however, against this supposition.

Verse 25.—When he saw. When the "man" saw that he did not prevail against Jacob—that Jacob would not yield. Of course, the "man" could have overwhelmed Jacob. It was Jacob's resolution that would not give way.

Verse 26.—For the day breaketh. Why the breaking of the day was a reason for the "man's" going, does not appear. Perhaps he did not choose to leave a different impression of himself on Jacob's mind from that which was produced in the darkness and stillness of the night; or perhaps he meant to remind Jacob that the duties of day-light were about calling the patriarch. But Jacob's resolution was strong. Notwithstanding the dislocation of his hip, he persisted in holding on to the mysterious stranger.

Verses 27, 28.—No more Jacob, but Israel. "Israel" means, "One who strives with God," with the implication that the strife is successful. For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men. Rather, "For thou hast striven with God and with men." Not so much a general characterization of Jacob, or a promise to him, as a statement of fact justifying the change of name. Still the characterization and the promise are both implied.

Verse 29.—If Jacob's question seems to partake of presumption, let it be remembered that the awful stranger had chosen to reveal himself in just such a measure of his own proper glory as to excite the patriarch's curiosity, without, at the same time, quenching the curiosity in fear. The reserve with which this being replied, was sufficient to silence Jacob. At the same time, the coveted "blessing" was bestowed.

Verse 30.—Peniel. "Face of God." "Peniel," in the next verse, has the same meaning. My life is preserved. "My soul was delivered." Jacob was now awed enough to deem it wonderful that he should still live after the vision he had enjoyed.

The best view of this narrative is, that it relates a real occurrence, and an occurrence that took place when Jacob was awake. The object of it was perhaps to teach Jacob, and through Jacob all of us, that, in their relations with God, men are weak when they are strong, and strong when they are weak. As a matter of fact, Jacob's wrestling with the angel has been, in all ages of the church, a favorite figure for importunity in prayer.

However worldly-wise you may have been in the conduct of your affairs, your prosperity is yet the gift of God.

Have the wholesome thought, when you are struggling against circumstances, that you may be struggling against God.

God is well pleased to be pleaded with in the spirit that says, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Here we have a traveler not alone and on foot, but with a great company of servants, wives, children, flocks, and herds. Who can this be? Let the children guess; it will gain their attention. Then tell them that it is Jacob; that twenty years have passed, he is now rich, has eleven sons, and is on his

way back to his Father's house. Would Esau like him to come home, or would he still try to kill him? In his prayer he reminded God of his promises. Next he confessed how unworthy he was, and thanked God for all his mercies; then he prayed earnestly to be delivered, and again told God about his promises. This makes true prayer; trusting in God's promises; confession of not deserving any thing; thankfulness for what God has done; and earnest asking.

While prayer together is right and good, yet every one needs to have a place where they can pray alone.

This stranger was Jesus, and it teaches us not only to pray earnestly, but to keep on praying till we get what we ask for. This is called prevailing prayer. Jacob's old name meant deceiver. Now he was forgiven that sin; he had begged for God's blessing and had prevailed, or got it. So now he received a better name—Israel, which means prince, because his prayer had power with God as a prince has power. So God gives a new name to all who overcome, even Christ's own name, a Christian.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youth's Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 94.

- 1. A twin son of one of the patriarchs.
2. The youngest son of his twin brother.
3. The most ancient of the prophets, whose prophecy, though not included in the Scripture canon, is recorded in one of the epistles of the New Testament.
4. A town in Galilee where Jesus spent the days of His youth.
5. A village where He revealed Himself to two of His disciples on the eve of His resurrection.
6-7. The father and mother of John the Baptist.
8. The ancient name of the place where dwelt Joseph, in whose tomb our Lord was buried.

These initials form the name of a memorial stone raised by Samuel in commemoration of a signal victory over the enemy at Mizpah.

—Watchman.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

116. Form a Square of these five words—the same down as across.

- 1. A large powerful man.
2. The most important part of Asia.
3. A poisonous serpent.
4. A brother's daughter.
5. Noxious plants.

TRANSLITERATIONS. Change the following words by words differing in one letter at a time:

- 117. Star to Moon.
118. Lord to Lady.
119. Books to Paper.
120. Ride to walk.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 93.

CENTRAL DIAMOND PUZZLE.

G
ARK
ELEOT
ETHA NIM
GALATIANS
ADVERSARIES
KIRJATH JEARIM
BAASHAJE HUNADAR
JONATHAN PAUL JAMES
YIRGINMOT HEROF JESUS
STRENGTHEN EBYTHE LORD
GREATS HEPHER DOTHTS HEEP
TEACH ME LORD TOLOVETH EEE
WISDOMHONORANDGLORY
THESEALTOF THE EARTH
PROCEASTINAT ION
SEARCH HISWORD
DEVOTEDNESS
BEMISION
REPHAIM
SPEAR
DEN
P

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 107. Shovel, hovel.
108. Spine, pine.
109. Trifle, rifle.
110. Prelate, relate.
111. Swallow, wallow.
112. Women, omen.
113. Weasel, easel.
114. Weight, eight.
115. S no W
T mine R
O liv E
R epubli C
M on K
S hip S

STORMS. WRECKS.

The grand old book of God still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned over and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the sacred word.

The Lady Dandelion.

L.—OPENING DAY.

Scarcely waked up in the morning
Is the Lady Dandelion,
When a little yellow bonnet
Gaily she begins to try on.

Such a coronet of fringes
Is it—such a glow of color—
Even the gold upon the plumage
Of the oriole is duller.

All she cares for is the fashion;
For she waits not to see whether
It is timely as to season,
Or is proper as to weather.

She was born to lead and dazzle,
And her followers will be plenty,
And because of that one little
Yellow bonnet, there'll be twenty.

II.—THE CLOSE OF THE SEASON.

Scarce a week has scattered sunshine
On the Lady Dandelion,
When a little snowy head dress
Gravely she begins to tie on.

It looks quite as if a fairy
In a frolic had begun it;
Or as if a nimble spider
In a busy mood had spun it.

Ah, I see old Time is busy
With this stylish little lady;
Ruffled white-cap is a night-cap!
She is past her beauty's hey-day.

Nothing now she cares for fashion;
All she asks a bed to die on!
Blows a gust! and in a moment
Gone is Lady Dandelion!

—Wide Awake.

War's Horrors.

A FIELD BATTERY IN ACTION.

Did you ever see a battery take position? It hasn't the thrill of a cavalry charge, nor the grimness of a line of bayonets moving slowly and determinedly on, but there is a peculiar excitement about it that makes old veterans rise in their saddles and cheer.

We have been fighting at the edge of the woods. Every cartridge-box has been emptied once and more, and a fourth of the brigade has melted away in dead and wounded and missing. Not a cheer is heard in the whole brigade. We know that we are being driven foot by foot, and that when we break back once more the line will go to pieces, and the enemy will pour through the gap.

Here comes help! Down the crowded, highway gallops a battery, withdrawn from some other position to save ours. The field fence is scattered while you could count thirty, and the guns rush for the hill behind us. Six horses to a piece—three riders to each gun. Over dry ditches, where a farmer would not drive a wagon, through clumps of bushes, over logs a foot thick, every horse on the gallop, every rider lashing his team and yelling—the sight behind us makes us forget the foe in front. The guns jump two feet high as the heavy wheels strike rock or log, but not a horse slackens his pace, not a cannoner loses his seat. Six guns, six caissons, 60 horses, 80 men race for the brow of the hill as if he who reached it first would be knighted.

A moment ago the battery was a confused mob. We look again, and the six guns are in position, the detached horses hurrying away, the ammunition chests open, and along our line runs the command, "Give them one more volley and fall back to support the guns!" We have scarcely obeyed when boom! boom! opens the battery, and jets of fire jump down and scorch the green trees under which we fought and despaired.

The shattered old brigade has a chance to breathe for the first time in three hours as we form in line of battle behind the guns and lie down. What grim, cool fellows those cannoners are! Every man is a perfect machine. Bullets plash dust into their faces, but they do not wince. Bullets sing over and around them, but they do not dodge. There goes one to the earth, shot through the head as he sponged his gun. The machinery loses just one beat—misses just one cog in the wheel—and then works away again as before.

Every gun is using short fuse shell. The ground shakes and trembles—the roar shuts out all sounds from a battle-line three miles long, and the shell goes shrieking into the swamp to cut trees short off to mow great gaps in the bushes—to hunt out and shatter and mangle men until their corpses cannot be recognized as human. You would

think a tornado was howling through the forest, followed by billows of fire, and yet men live through it—ay! press forward to capture the battery! We can hear their shouts as they form for a rush.

Now the shells are changed for grape and canister, and the guns are served so fast that all reports blend into one mighty roar. The shriek of a shell is the wickedest sound in war, but nothing makes the flesh crawl like the demoniac singing, purring, whistling grape-shot, and the serpent-like hiss of canister. Men's legs and arms are not shot through, but torn off. Heads are torn from bodies, and bodies out in two. A round shot or shell takes two men out of the ranks as it crashes through. Grape and canister mow a swath and pile the dead on top of each other.

Through the smoke we see a swarm of men. It is not a battle-line, but a mob of men desperate enough to bathe their bayonets in the flame of the guns. The guns leap from the ground almost as they are depressed on the foe, and shrieks and screams and shouts blend into one awful and steady cry. Twenty men out on the battery are down, and the firing is interrupted. The foe accepts it as a sign of wavering and come rushing on. They are not ten feet away when the guns give them a last shot. That discharge picks living men off their feet and throws them into the swamp, a blackened, bloody mass.

Up, now, as the enemy are among the guns! There is a silence of ten seconds, and then the flash and roar of more than 3,000 muskets, and a rush forward with bayonets. For what? Neither on the right nor the left nor in front of us is a living foe! There are corpses around, which have been struck by three, four, and even six bullets, and nowhere on this acre of ground is a wounded man! The wheels of the guns cannot move until the blockade of dead is removed. Men cannot pass from caisson to gun without climbing over windrows of dead. Every gun and wheel is smeared with blood—every foot of grass has its horrible stain.

Historians write of the glory of war. Burial parties saw murder where historians saw glory.—Detroit Free Press.

Blind man's buff in Ancient Greece.

Two thousand years ago! Do you ever think about the little boys and girls who lived so long ago? Well, in the celebrated country of Greece they were as fond of sport as children of the present day, only they had not so many wonderful toys made for them as are manufactured now. But it might surprise you to know how many games have been played century after century, and are still played and enjoyed to-day. The babies had their rattles and bright colored balls, and what we call "blind man's buff" was a favorite game among them. Perhaps you know about the old giant Polyphemus, who was master of a race of one-eyed giants, and who devoured the Greeks that were round his cave, until they succeeded in putting out his eye, and how, afterwards, he still groped about and endeavored to find them, but in vain. Well, the boys and girls of Greece used to represent this story by the game of "blind man's buff." The one blindfolded, was called Polyphemus, and the others would hide and pretend they were the Greeks whom he was to find. Another way of playing this game was for the children to run round about the blindfolded person, and one of them touch him. If he could tell correctly who it was, the two exchanged places.

Musical.

Let no poet, great or small,
Say that he will sing a song;
For song cometh, if at all,
Not because we woo it long,
But because it suits its will,
Tired at last of being still.

"We darken the cages of birds when we wish to teach them to sing." For the same reason, it may be, God sends dark shadows over the hearts and homes of His people.

A canary bird upbraided a tom cat for singing out of tune. Tom answered that he was not singing the canary's tune, but that in his own tune he rarely got out or broke down.

Beats play a very important part in music. Mozart, when asked what, in his opinion, was the most effective point in music, laconically replied: "No music." In like manner a rest from the study of music is often an important point in the student's education.—Church's Musical Visitor.