

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. 8-22.
 11. Dec. 12. *Last Days of Joseph.* Gen. 1. 14-26.
 12. Dec. 19. *Review.*
 13. Dec. 26. *Lesson Selected by the School.*

Lesson X.—DECEMBER.

THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB.

Gen. xlviii. 8-22.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 15, 16.

The famine increased in severity, but under Joseph's wise management the people were preserved and the treasures of Egypt were greatly increased. After Jacob had spent seventeen years in Egypt he was about to die; Joseph then visited him, with his two sons, and the events of this lesson took place.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you."—Gen. xlviii. 21.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Last Days of Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 8-22.
 T. Continuance of Famine, Gen. xlvii. 13-26.
 W. Jacob about to Die, Gen. xlvii. 27-31; xlviii. 1-7.
 T. Hid from the Wise, Matt. xi. 20-30.
 F. No Flesh shall Glory, 1 Cor. i. 18-31.
 S. The Sure Word of Prophecy, 2 Pet. i. 12-21.
 S. The Parting Blessing, Luke xxiv. 44-53.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 9: Gen. xxxiii. 5; xxvii. 4.
 With vs. 10: Gen. xxvii. 1; xxvii. 27.
 With vs. 11: Gen. xlv. 26.
 With vs. 15: Heb. xi. 21; Gen. xvii. 1; xxiv. 40.
 With vs. 16: Gen. xxviii. 15; Psa. xxxiv. 22; Amos ix. 12; Acts xv. 17.
 With vs. 19: Num. i. 33, 35; Deut. xxxiii. 17.
 With vs. 20: Ruth iv. 11, 12.
 With vs. 21: Gen. xli. 4; 1. 24.
 With vs. 22: Josh. xxiv. 32; xvii. 14; John iv. 5; Gen. xv. 16.

THE BLESSING ALWAYS OF GRACE.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Expectation of Nature, Vss. 8-17. II. The Decision of Grace, Vss. 18-22.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 8-17.—What was Jacob's condition at the time of this lesson? (vs. 1.) Whom did Joseph take to see Jacob? What did Jacob say of these lads? (vs. 5.) How did he receive Joseph's sons? What did he promise to do to them? In what manner did Joseph bring them for the blessing? Why did he put them in this position? How did Israel place his hands in blessing the boys? Why was this contrary to the expectation of nature? What words did he use in the blessing? Why is he said to have blessed Joseph?

II. Vss. 18-22.—What appeal does Joseph in vs. 18 make to his father? What did the father do? What additional words of blessing are given in vs. 20? Which son was set first? What prophecy is uttered in vs. 21? What was the portion described in vs. 22. (Gen. xv. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 8.—Jacob, having lived seventeen years in Egypt, is on the eve of dissolution. The tidings of his father's approaching end bring Joseph to his bedside. Joseph is accompanied by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, now about eighteen or twenty years old. These, Jacob adopts for his own. This done, and the aged patriarch having indulged in a natural vein of reminiscence respecting Rachel, Joseph's mother, now observes his two grandsons, and asks "Who are these?"

Verse 10.—*Kissed them, etc.*: in fatherly love, not thus imparting the blessing.

Verse 11.—*Thy seed*: the old idea of the seed again crops out. He thought he had lost Joseph; and, behold, God had restored Joseph to him, and with Joseph, Joseph's seed.

Verse 12.—*His knees*: that is, Jacob's knees, where they stood as he kissed and embraced them. *Bowed himself*: in reverence for his father and for the impending blessing.

Verse 13.—*Joseph took them*: the right hand, as the hand of honor, was

supposed to convey the main blessing; therefore Joseph would naturally have it rest on the head of Manasseh, the elder.

Verse 14.—*Guiding his hands*: under divine direction, but contrary to Joseph's expectation. *Wittingly*: knowingly, wisely. Every indication favors the idea that a spirit of true prophecy accompanied the impartation of the father's blessing in the line of the chosen patriarchs. The ceremonious laying on of hands now appears, for the first time, in Scripture.

Verse 15.—*Blessed Joseph*: not in person, but in his seed.

Verse 16.—*The angel*: not a created angel, but the Angel of the covenant, God manifest. Ex. iii. 2. *And let my name be named on them*. Perhaps as indicating the adoption of them into the number of Jacob's own sons.

Verses 17, 18.—*Displeased him*. Feeling that there was a mistake. With all reverence toward his father, Joseph offered to change Israel's hands, at the same time explaining his action.

Verse 19.—*Refused*: acting for God, not for himself nor for Joseph. A multitude of nations. This prophecy was amply accomplished. Ephraim was the head of the kingdom of the ten tribes. See Isa. vii. 2, 8, 9, 17; ix. 9; xi. 13; Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 19; Hos. vi. 4, 10; vii. 1, 11, etc.

Verse 20.—*He set Ephraim before Manasseh*: for purposes best known to God, who directed his act.

Verse 21.—*Bring you again*: as foretold to Abraham (Gen. xv. 13-16).

Verse 22.—*One portion*: of land near Shechem. See Gen. xxxiii. 18-20; John iv. 5. This was Joseph's before the tribal allotments under Joshua (Josh. chap. 16). *Amorite*: meaning Canaanites in general. See Num. xiii. 29. The "portion" meant is Shechem, where Jacob (chap. xxxiii. 19) made a purchase of land. Joshua xxiv. 32, shows that Joseph's sons came into possession of this "portion."

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Seventeen years passed since Jacob was introduced to Pharaoh. At last one day, word was brought to Joseph that his father was sick; so taking his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, he went to visit him. When it was told Jacob that Joseph was come, he sat up in bed to receive him. Jacob had been lame for fifty years, ever since that night at Peniel when the angel put his thigh out of joint. Now his sight also had failed, and when Joseph's sons were brought in he did not know them, but said, "Who are these?" And Joseph said, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place."

Jacob had told Joseph before, that he would adopt his two sons to share like his own, in his blessing and the inheritance. And now Jacob wished to have them brought near, that he might bless them as he was inspired by God.

Joseph led his sons up by the bedside in such a way that his father's right hand would naturally fall on the head of Manasseh, the elder; but Jacob crossed his hands, and laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, the younger. Joseph noticed it, and took hold of his father's right hand to change it, telling him that he was mistaken—that the other was the first-born. But Jacob said, "I know it, my son." And then the dying old man told Joseph that his younger son should be the greater. With his crossed hands resting on the heads of the lads, the right on Ephraim and the left on Manasseh, Jacob spoke the beautiful blessing of vs. 15, 16, showing that he remembered the angel with whom he wrestled at the brook.

Thus, through his two sons, Joseph received a double portion, for they became the heads of two tribes, as if they had been Jacob's own sons; and when the land of Canaan was afterward divided among the children of Israel, instead of the tribe of Joseph, the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Manasseh each received a share.

Then Jacob had all his sons called up before him, and gave them each such a blessing as foretold his future. But to Judah, the fourth son, came the best blessing, even that from him should come the promised Saviour.

Whatever God has given to us in a promise we should give back to Him in a prayer.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 100.

- 'Tis where Paul tarried on his way, And reached Miletus the next day.
- 'Tis what God sent, in Joshua's day, To drive the Amorites away.
- 'Tis what the aged patriarch said, Who heard that Joseph was not dead.
- 'Tis that which, on a thousand hills, God claims and uses as He wills.
- 'Tis that low shrub which Moses took To sprinkle blood upon the book.
- 'Tis that which, for his people's sake, Our merciful High Priest did make.
- 'Tis where, when good old Gideon died, They laid him by his father's side.
- Rab-Mag of Babylon; 'tis he Who gave God's prophet liberty.
- 'Tis Asher's second son, by name, When Israel into Egypt came.
- 'Tis Bethel by another name, Which Amaziah's words proclaim.
- 'Tis the last Asian church of seven To whom the Saviour spake from heaven.
- 'Tis the thirteenth of Ziklag's band, Men skilled to fight with either hand.
- 'Tis one to Paul and Silas sent, To end their false imprisonment.

Each word or name divide in two, But all the latter halves eschew; Then downward their initials trace, And upward those in final place.

Lo! now, two books of ancient fame— Their subject here, and there their name! And who ponders them with care, Shall find the truth exemplified there.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

137. SLAUGHTERING.
 Find the words here unmercifully decapitated.
 Behead—a kind of grain, and leave a property of the sun; behead again, and leave what all must do to live; behead again, and leave a preposition.
 Behead—an article of dress, and leave a kind of grain; behead again, and leave a preposition.
 Behead—a large fish, and leave hearty; behead again, and leave a beverage.
 Behead—a wild animal, and leave part of the body; behead, curtail, and leave an article.
 Behead—a receptacle, and leave an animal; curtail, and leave an interjection.
 Behead—a relative pronoun, and leave an article of dress; behead again, and leave a preposition; behead again, and leave a consonant.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 99.

- J ob.....Job ii. 10.
- O badiah.....1 Kings xviii. 13.
- N aaman.....2 Kings v. 1-14.
- A braham.....Gen. xvii. 25.
- H azael.....2 Kings viii. 13.

JONAH.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

135. Y A C H T
 A B H O R
 C H A S E
 H O S T S
 T R E S S

CORRECTION.—The latter should have been "a lock of hair."

136. L a m B
 O h i O
 N e s S
 D e n T
 O t t O
 N u N

LONDON. BOSTON.

Swimming Contest.

Very successful efforts are being made in England to induce young people at school to learn to swim. The following from the *Schoolmaster* of October 30th, published in London, will be interesting to our young readers as well as to those of mature age.

"Cold without, but warm within; plenty of water in the inside, with abundance of rain on the outside." Such might be summed up as the state of the weather on Saturday last. It was scarcely the kind of day for aquatic sports, although there was plenty of the elements at hand. The keen cold air was suggestive of something else than a plunge in cold water, and the Lambeth Baths might be considered as the antipodes of pleasure. The day had been fixed, however, for a swimming contest, and delay was out of the question. The London Schools Swimming Club has been doing its best for some years—and never more actively than in the year that is now past—to give opportunities for learning the art of swimming. By obtaining favorable terms from bath proprietors, and furnishing free instruction at convenient times, the Club has been able to do a vast amount of good. At the close of the season, there is a competition for prizes among the boys and girls who have been under instruction during the year. Last Saturday was the time for the boys, and to-day the girls will have their turn. It was indeed a change to step from the outer air to the warmer

atmosphere of the baths; more than 200 lads were disputing themselves in costumes of the scantiest, shouting in all the exuberance of good spirits. "And what but high-strung health this dancing joyance breeds?" In the baths and around it, on the roofs of the dressing rooms, on the staircases and in the galleries, the young competitors were racing as if the time were summer and the place the golden sands! The competitors were grouped in seventeen batches of a dozen each, and were required, as a preliminary test, to swim across the bath. The first two of each lot were set aside for a further contest of sixes from end to end. The successful swimmers were again arranged in smaller numbers till the contest was finished by a swim through two lengths of the bath. The winners of the chief prizes were boys from St. Thomas-street School, Limehouse, and Cripplegate Schools. Mr. Calmady-Richardson acted as starter till the arrival of Mr. John Macgregor ("Rob Roy"), who "finished the innings." Throughout the whole time of trial the scene was of the liveliest description; cheers and other forms of noisy approbation filled the air without an interval of rest. At the end of the contest Mr. Macgregor addressed the boys in a few sensible remarks. He congratulated them in having acquired an accomplishment which would be useful through their lifetime, and possibly enable them to save the life of others. He congratulated them also in having learned the lesson of obedience and cleanliness. Votes of thanks were awarded to Mr. Macgregor and Mr. Calmady-Richardson (to whom no small share of the success of the club is due) on the motion of Messrs. Herniman and Gill.

The Ant's Dairy.

Do ants keep cows? Let us see. A little insect named an aphid is found on the leaf of almost every plant. This little parasite lives on the sweet juice called honey-dew. Now the ants are very fond of this honey-dew, and know that they can obtain a supply from the body of the aphid.

The ants therefore, climb up trees on whose leaves the aphides have collected. Then an ant goes close to one of these insects for a drop of the sweet juice. If this be not soon given out, the ant will gently tap the body of the aphid, and thus obtain a supply of the sweet fluid. After feasting on this, the ant will pass to another little aphid and treat it in the same manner for another drop.

But the ant has sense enough to treat the aphid as we treat our cows. Our farmers, you know, keep the cows in enclosed meadows, and supply them with hay and turnips when the grass fails. The ants also take a number of aphides close to their nests, and there keep them secure and supply them with suitable food. Now the lady-birds are also fond of the aphides, and eat them up by hundreds. But the ant has sense to keep the aphid for a supply of honey-dew instead of killing it as the lady-bird does. Is not the ant, therefore, entitled to be regarded as a cow-keeper, and are not the tiny little aphides his milch-cows? —*The Nursery.*

Authors and Readers.

It is pleasant to recognize the relations of people and things in this world, and notice how all are connected. The love between parents and children is, when properly appreciated, the source of much joy and happiness. Then the attachment between a minister and the members of his congregation is often connected with some of the holiest and best influences known upon earth. It is not often that we see or hear much of the relation existing between an author and his readers, but the communication of thought must lead to various points of contact between the minds of writer and reader, and the latter either benefited or injured by such contact.

One of the best writers of books for boys, Mr. W. H. G. Kingston recently wrote the following farewell, just before his death, to the boys of England. It will be read with interest by many boys and girls of Nova Scotia as well.

My Dear boys:—I have been engaged as you know, for a very large portion of my life in writing books for you. This occupation has been a source of the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to me, and I am willing to believe, to you also. Our connection with each other in this world must, however, shortly cease. I have for some time been suffering from serious illness, and have been informed by the highest medical authorities that my days are numbered. Of the truth of this I am convinced, by the rapid progress the disease is making. It is my desire, therefore, to wish you all a sincere and hearty farewell! I want

you to know that I am leaving this life in unspeakable happiness, because I rest my soul on my Saviour: trusting only and entirely to the merits of the great atonement, by which my sins (and yours) have been put away forever. Dear boys, I ask you to give your hearts to Christ, and earnestly pray that all of you may meet me in heaven.

Rev. Dr. Cuyler on the Theatre.

Every popular amusement which bids for the support of God's people must submit to this test: Wherever a Christian cannot take Christ and a clean conscience with him, he has no right to go. The theatre, in these days, asks for the suffrages and support of church members. But its advocates always present to us, in argument, an ideal play-house, whose actors are virtuous people, whose dramas conform to Christian morality, and which rigidly excludes every kind of sensual temptation. Such a Puritanic theatre would be entitled, at least, to respectful treatment from the church. But every person of common-sense knows that the actual average American theatre is no more like this ideal play-house, than the average pope is like St. Peter, or the average politician is like Abraham Lincoln. A Puritanic theatre would become bankrupt in a twelvemonth. The great mass of those who frequent the average play-house go there for strong passion excitement. They go for the very object which makes it dangerous to a servant of Jesus Christ. I do not affirm that every popular play is immoral, and every attendant is on a scent for sensualities. But the theatre is a concrete institution; it must be judged in the gross, and to a tremendous extent it is only a gilded nastiness. It unsexes womanhood, by putting her publicly in male attire—too often in almost no attire at all. One of the most eminent living actresses declares that she only enters the theatre to enact her part, and has but little association with her own profession. A converted actor once pointed me to a play-house in which he used to perform, and said, "Behind those curtains lies Sodom!" We pastors know too well that when our young members form an appetite for the stage, they generally lose their appetite for Christ's service. Can we handle pitch without being defiled? Wherefore let us come out and be separate from this unclean institution; for Christ hath no concord with Belial.

A Chinese Dinner.

[From Jules Werne's "Tribulations of a Chinaman."]

For the first course were handed cakes, caviar, fried grasshoppers, dried fruits, and Ning-Po oysters. Then followed successively, at short intervals, ducks, pigeons and peewits' eggs poached, swallows' nests with mashed eggs, fricassees of ginseng, stewed sturgeons' gills, whales sinews with sweet sauce, fresh-water tadpoles, fried crabs' spawn, sparrows' gizzards, sheep's eyes stuffed with garlic, radishes in milk flavored with apricot kernels, matelotes of holothurians, bamboo-sprouts in syrup, and sweet salads. The last course consisted of pine-apples from Singapore, earthnuts, salted almonds, savory mangoes, the white fleshy fruits of the "long-yen," the pulpy fruit of the "lit-chee," chestnuts, and preserved oranges from Canton. For drinks, there were beer, wine from Chao-Chigne, and an ample supply of champagne. After the desert, rice was served, which the guests raised to their mouths with little chop-sticks. Three hours were spent over the banquet. When it was ended, and at the time when, according to European usage, salvers of rose-water are frequently handed around, the waiting-maids brought napkins steeped in warm water, which all the company rubbed over their faces, apparently with great satisfaction.

Most of us at some time or other must have met with the preachers who make up for natural laziness or incapacity by claiming for their discourses great "soundness." The pity is that they are mostly all "sound"—only that and nothing more! Dr. Lyman Beecher, one day on his return from church, said to his son Henry, "It seems to me I never made a worse sermon than I did this morning." "Why, father," said Henry, "I never heard you preach so loud in all my life." "That is the way," replied the doctor; "I always holles when I haven't anything to say."

"Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day," said an advising mother to her little son. "Well, then, mamma, let us eat the raspberry pie that is in the cupboard," was the reply.