

## BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

**THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.** (New York: I. K. Funk & Co.)—The first number of the fifth volume of this excellent periodical is a more than usually good one. It will greatly help many; it can scarcely hinder one.

**MONTHLY CABINET OF ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF PREACHERS, ETC.** (Boston: Howard Ganer.)—This is a new candidate for public favour. Instead of giving skeletons of sermons, according to the old custom, it gives illustrations in the way of anecdotes, etc., appropriate to certain texts. About half of the publication is taken up with illustrations of the International Series of S. S. Lessons for the month. The plan adopted may be found useful by all for whom it is specially prepared.

**THE TRUE FAITH OF OUR FOREFATHERS.** (New York: The American News Co.)—It appears that Archbishop Gibbons wrote a book called "The Faith of Our Fathers," in defence of the Church of Rome, and that the Rev. J. Stearns, D.D., Chaplain of the Diocese of Easton (apparently an Episcopalian like the Archbishop, but not a Roman Catholic) controverted his teachings in a book entitled "The Faith of Our Forefathers." The book now before us, written by "A Professor of Theology" in a Maryland College, purports to be a refutation of the latter work and a vindication of the former. In such a controversy, as between parties who agree in refusing to make the Bible the only test of a true or a false Church, we have no stake, and can scarcely be expected to feel seriously interested. After a somewhat hasty comparison of a few of the quotations from Dr. Stearns with the remarks made upon them, we would say that, in flippant verbiage and agile sophistry, the Romanist professor has rather the advantage of the Anglican chaplain.

HEAVEN will pay for any loss we may suffer to gain it; but nothing can pay for the loss of heaven.—R. Baxter.

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON XLIV.

Oct. 31. } **JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.** { Gen. xxxvii. 1-5, 23-36.  
1880. }

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Who is able to stand before envy."—Prov. xxvii. 4.

## HOME READINGS.

M. Gen. xxxiii. 1-20.... Meeting of Esau and Jacob.  
Tu. Gen. xxxv. 1-15 Jacob Revisits Bethel.  
W. Gen. xxxvi. 16-29.... Death of Rachel and Isaac.  
Th. Gen. xxxvii. 1-11.... Joseph Hated.  
F. Gen. xxxvii. 12-22.... Joseph Visits his Brethren.  
S. Gen. xxxvii. 23-36.... Joseph Sold.  
Sab. Prov. xxvii. 1-11.... Power of Envy.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

Jacob finding that, in answer to his prayer at the ford of the brook Jabbok, the anger of his brother Esau was turned away, sojourned for some time in that neighbourhood before crossing the Jordan.

The subsequent events are: the removal to Shechem, followed by the destruction of the inhabitants of that place by Jacob's sons, in revenge for an outrage committed upon their sister; a second visit to Bethel, and a renewal of the promise and covenant; the birth of Benjamin and death of his mother, Rachel, at "Ephrath, which is Bethlehem;" the death of Isaac.

Hereabouts the narrative glides almost imperceptibly from the history of Jacob into that of his favourite son, Joseph, with whose early adventures our present lesson is taken up. The lesson may be divided as follows: (1) *Joseph Hated by his Brethren*, (2) *Joseph Sold as a Slave*, (3) *Jacob's Grief for his Son*.

**I. JOSEPH HATED BY HIS BRETHREN.**—Vers. 1-5. That part of the Bible narrative which forms the text of our lesson finds Jacob living at Mamre, or Hebron, "where Abraham and Isaac" had "sojourned." Verse 1 is not supposed to indicate that Jacob's position in the land, as to permanency, differed from that of Abraham and Isaac; he was, like them, a stranger and a sojourner.

**1. A Promising Family.** What a fine family of grown up sons Jacob had; and what a blessing they might be to each other and to their parents if they had the love of God in their hearts; but this their conduct shews most of them had not; whatever they may have become in later days, they were at this period practical atheists or idolaters; at least it is evident that notwithstanding the instruction they had received from their father, they disregarded God and His laws. The heart that is not filled with the love of God is in danger of being occupied by envy, hatred, and other base feelings.

**2. A Father's Partiality.** Now Israel loved Joseph:

more than all his children. Perhaps Israel could not help that. Joseph had been for many years "the son of his old age," and though a rival, in that respect, had recently appeared in the person of Benjamin, the latter had not had time as yet to supersede Joseph in his father's affections. It is also evident that there was something very amiable about Joseph's character; that he was honest, faithful and obedient; and that he was warmly attached to his father in return. No one, then, blames Jacob for loving Joseph; but everyone finds fault with him for exhibiting his partiality for his favourite son in such a marked manner as to rouse the envy and hatred of his other children. The remembrance of his own sufferings, in his youth, from the favouritism of Isaac, was not sufficient to deter him from following his father's evil example.

**3. A Dream and its Consequences.** And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren; and they hated him yet the more. The following remarks on this verse are from the "National S. S. Teacher." "The dream was significant—so significant that his brothers were able instantly to tell its meaning. He dreamed that their sheaves made obeisance to his sheaf. With indignation and with the contempt which elder brothers almost always feel for the younger, they exclaimed: 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us?' Afterward he had another dream, in which the sun, moon, and eleven stars made obeisance to him, and this he told, not only to his brethren, but to his father also. For this, Jacob openly rebuked the lad, but, like the mother of Christ when He gave to His parents in His boyhood a hint of His own knowledge of His divine sonship, secretly he treasured the saying. The dream was a ratification of his own evident purposes, and he esteemed it to be a revelation from the Lord. The brothers had hated him, first, for their father's preference for him. It was not pleasant thus to be put aside in favour of a younger son. They did not stop to inquire why it was that their father loved Joseph more than he did them. They disliked him because of the selection that their father had made of him, but in all probability they detested him most because of the estimable qualities that made him peculiarly dear to Jacob. Their hatred was but the natural antagonism of wickedness to goodness. On account of his precedence with their father, they could not give him the ordinary salutation: 'Peace be unto thee!' When he told his first dream 'they hated him yet the more.' So repugnant was the idea that he should have dominion over them, that his dream, which they regarded as a divine revelation, instead of making them submissive, only made him more obnoxious than ever. When he made known his second dream, and when it had received the seal of their father's interpretation, envy, the most despicable and malicious of all ill feelings, was added to hatred. Then they were ripe for any sort of crime against their brother."

**II. JOSEPH SOLD AS A SLAVE.**—Vers. 23-28. In the omitted verses (6-22) we have the particulars of Joseph's dreams; the departure of his brethren to pasture their flocks at a distance from home; his journey in quest of them, at his father's bidding, for the purpose of ascertaining their welfare; their cruel plot for his destruction, hastily concocted while he approached them across the plain; and his eldest brother's futile scheme for his rescue.

**1. An Inhuman Brotherhood.** Considering the irreligious character of Joseph's brethren their belief in his dreams as revelations from God is supposed to have rested on superstition; and it is quite true that irreligion and superstition often go together. But, be this as it may, it is evident that they believed in the dreams, and feared their accomplishment in their brother's future elevation above themselves; and in view of this fact their course was impious as well as cruel, illogical as well as immoral. When we come to the end of Joseph's history, and look back to this episode, we shall be in a position to understand in some measure what a stupid thing it is for man to fight against God. But the wrongheadedness of these men was as nothing compared to their hard-heartedness, and even their defiance of God is apt to be lost sight of in the contemplation of their cruelty to their poor young brother, whom they ought to have protected with the last drop of their blood.

**2. An Unsuccessful Protector.** Only one voice was heard in Joseph's behalf, and that the voice of one who evidently did not possess the influence which his birthright ought to have given him, whose craft failed to supply the place of courage, and who, afterwards, instead of denouncing the criminals, became their "accomplice after the fact."

**3. A Profitable (?) Crime.** What profit is it that we slay our brother? This was Judah's question; and it is not the name alone that at this point calls up to memory the record of a notorious New Testament character. His proposal to sell Joseph into slavery was scarcely less cruel than the original intention of putting him to death. The change of plan was prompted, not by mercy but by greed. And what would it profit Judah and his brethren to sell Joseph? Twenty pieces of silver—about fifteen dollars, it is supposed. But suppose they should get millions of dollars for him, what then? "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26).

**III. JACOB'S GRIEF FOR HIS SON.**—Vers. 29-36. One sin leads to another. So it is with the sinner in all ages. A second wrong is committed, either to hide the first or to keep it in countenance.

**1. A Lie Told.** Joseph's brethren did not tell their father in so many words that his son had been devoured by a wild beast; they only employed means to make him believe that this was the case; nevertheless, they broke the ninth commandment; and so did the little girl who, having broken a costly vase, shut the cat into the room in which the damage had been done.

**2. Circumstantial Evidence.** Jacob would, no doubt, be loath enough to believe that his son had been killed by a wild animal, but the evidence was what most people would call "overwhelming." The utmost caution should be exercised in dealing with evidence of this nature.

**3. A Father's Sorrow.** We again quote from the "National S. S. Teacher." "1. Jacob rent his clothes—mourned—many days. His mourning was extended be-

yond the usual formal time. The intensity of his grief and his anguish, to his sons must have been appalling, and to them it must have been worse than a whip of scorpions every time they beheld his unceasing sorrow. 2. All his sons and daughters rose up to comfort him. In this what hypocrisy is manifest, at least, on the part of the sons! They assumed to be so innocent in the matter. They fostered the idea that a wild beast had devoured the missing boy. They pretended to be full of grief themselves on account of his death. But Jacob would not be comforted. It is easier to give occasion for sorrow than to allay it. He declared that he would go down to the grave mourning for his son. In his inappeasable grief they had constantly before them one of the most accusing reminders of their sin.

## NOTES ON THE PRESBYTERIAN S. S. TEACHER'S COURSE OF STUDY—1880.

## LESSON IV.—FOR OCTOBER 24TH, 1880.

## The Ministry of Moses.

Moses is brought back, to the impulse of his heart, forty years ago, when he supposed he should have been recognized as the deliverer of his people.

God has been preparing him for the lofty mission and now He calls him. "Certainly I will be with thee." "I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt." "I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians." "I will be with thy mouth, and teach ye what ye shall do."

## I. THE MEETING OF MOSES AND AARON.

(Exod. iv. 14, 16, 27.)

The two brothers united after forty years' absence. United in one great work. They are prepared for this work by different modes, and equipped with different gifts. They are on the eve of an eventful future.

## The Journey to Egypt.

(Exod. iv. 29-31.)

Moses and Aaron call the elders. They deliver their message. They shew their credentials. Their reception by the elders was, believing and reverential, hopeful and grateful.

After this interview the ministry of Moses and history of Israel become one—in the objects they had in view—in the God they trust—in the faith and obedience He required.

## Moses the Man of God.

There is a circle of followers but Moses is the principal and central person—Aaron, the eloquent, and his sons. Miriam the prophetess—Joshua the minister of Moses.

Moses speaks to Aaron, to Israel and to Pharaoh.—Exod. vii. 1-2; Exod. vi. 9.

Moses holds a high place among Bible characters.—Heb. iii. 2-5.

## II. THREE ASPECTS IN WHICH MOSES APPEARS.

(1) Working miracles.

He is commissioned to work miracles.—Exod. iv. 17. The miracles illustrate divine power, directed against idolatry.

Pharaoh and his magicians were specially proud of their skill and power, and Moses, under God, humbled and confounded them.—Exod. ix. 11.

(2) Leading the host of Israel.

He was appointed to this position by God.—Exod. xii. 50-51.

He was directed by the pillar of cloud.—Exod. xiv. 19; xii. 40-42.

(3) Teaching the people.

God gave the message..... Deut. v. 27. Moses faithfully gave it to the people.... Deut. v. 1-3. The burden and summary of his teaching. Deut. vi. 5-9.

## III. THE CONFLICT WITH PHARAOH.

The demand of Moses and Aaron accompanied with preliminary miracles (Exod. v. 1-3). Their authority for making such a demand (Exod. vii. 8, 9, 12). The credibility of the messenger. "The God of the Hebrews had met with us." The symbol of Moses' ordinary employment and the experience of forty years, fitted into his special mission. "Thy rod." The serpent was an object of worship in Egypt; it was overcome by the rod of Moses. The magicians imitated with great skill, but were foiled when it came to the issue of life.—Exod. viii. 18.

## The Ten Miracles Directed Against Egyptian Idolatry.

(Exod. xii. 12; xviii. 11.)

(1) The Nile was one of the highest Egyptian gods. The great festival was when the reddish water came down after the first high water. "The Red Nile" was changed into blood.—Exod. vii. 19-25; Jno. ii. 11.

(2) The land was covered with frogs, as a nuisance and source of loathsome pollution, and the gods were powerless to help.—Exod. viii. 1-15.

(3) The dust of the land became "lice," or gnats, no one could come to the temples or altars polluted with these insects. The priests exclaimed, "This is the finger of God."—Exod. viii. 16-19; Luke xi. 20.

(4) The swarms of flies. Directed to the impotence of Beelzebub—the fly-god. The Israelites were here severed from the Egyptians in these punishments.—Exod. viii. 23-24.

(5) The fatal disease on the cattle, the horses, etc.—Exod. ix. 6-7.

(6) The painful eruption on the skin of man and beast, whereby all were rendered unclean, and dishonour was heaped on the caste of the priesthood.—Exod. ix. 9.

(7) The destruction of the crops of the field.

(8) The plague of locusts devouring whatever was left in the hailstorm.—Exod. x. 5.

(9) The darkness.—Exod. x. 21-22.

(10) The death of the first born.—Exod. xi. 4-5.

The conflict extended from the month of June or July, when the Red Nile appears, to April, the beginning of years to Israel.

Pharaoh demanded miracles (Exod. vii. 9), and by them Moses was proved to be the messenger of God.

JOHN MCEWEN.