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SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1880, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday School Union.)

LESSON X.

DEC. 5.]

THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB.

Gen. 48: 8-22.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 15, 16.

8. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?

9. And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

10. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

11. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

12. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

13. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

14. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first born.

15. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day.

16. The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

17. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head.

19. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

20. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you.—Gen. 48: 21.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

As the day is, so is the strength.

NOTES.—MA-NAS-SEH, "forgetting," eldest son of Joseph by his Egyptian wife, and who, like his great-uncle Esau, appears to have lost his birthright, his brother Ephraim being preferred before him. His descendants, formed, however, one of the most important of the tribes entering Canaan, though they appear to have had idolatrous tendencies, possibly from the influence of the mother of Manasseh. From this tribe sprang some noted warriors, as Machir, Jair, Nobah, Gideon, and Jephthah.—E-PHRAIM, "doubly fruitful," second son of Joseph, but was preferred before his elder brother Manasseh, in the blessing bestowed by his grandfather Jacob; his descendants became the most powerful of the northern tribes.—ANGEL, not any created angel, but no doubt "the angel" with which Jacob wrestled, and whom he called God, Gen. 32: 21-30. Luther notes that the verb "to bless," which refers to the God of his fathers, the God who had been his shepherd, and the Angel who had redeemed him, is in the singular, not in the plural, showing that these three are but one God.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(1.) THE MEETING. (11.) THE BLESSING. I. THE MEETING.—(8.) WHO ARE THESE? Jacob in partial blindness, had doubtless supposed he was alone with Joseph. (10.) EM-

BRACED THEM, usual mode of cordial greeting in the East. (13.) EPHRAIM TOWARD ISRAEL'S LEFT HAND, as the younger he was to receive the secondary blessing. (14.) GUIDING HIS HANDS WITTINGLY, Jacob intended to prefer the younger before the elder.

II. THE BLESSING.—(15.) FED ME, a wanderer, see Ps. 23. (16.) ANGEL, see Notes; ALL EVIL, as instances, the danger from Laban, Esau, Sechem, famine. (17.) DISPLEASED, the birthright was a right highly esteemed, and not lightly disregarded by parent or child. (19.) I KNOW IT, Jacob was doubtless under Divine guidance in bestowing these blessings. (20.) AS EPHRAIM AND AS MANASSEH, they were the strongest tribes in the northern kingdom of Israel. (22.) ONE PORTION ABOVE THY BRETHREN, Joseph had two portions in Israel—one for Ephraim and one for Manasseh.

LESSON XI.

DEC. 12.]

LAST DAYS OF JOSEPH.

Gen. 50: 14-26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 18-21.

14. And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15. And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17. So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

19. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

21. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

22. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

23. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

24. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The memory of the just is blessed.—Prov. 10: 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Godliness is magnanimous, forgiving, and faithful unto the end.

NOTES.—PERADVENTURE, a clear case of guilty consciences needing no accuser. The wicked flee when no man pursueth. Again the tender-hearted brother wept when they spoke unto him. Grievously had they sinned, and bitter was their repentance. The magnanimous ruler, the forgiving brother, comforted them and spake kindly to their hearts; that is, his words reached and touched their hearts.—EMBALMED. In this chapter, we have the only instances of embalming referred to in the Old Testament. It was common in Egypt, and persons were trained to this work, as physicians and surgeons are among us. The usual process of embalming a body was to remove the brain and the intestines, wash the inside of the body with palm-wine and pounded perfumes, then fill it with pounded myrrh, cassia and other cosmetics, sew up the body and steep it in natron for seventy days. It was then swathed in bandages of linen cut into long strips and smeared with gum. Joseph's body was doubtless thus embalmed and preserved.—COFFIN. The coffin of Egypt was a large sarcophagus, made of wood or stone, highly ornamented, usually with scenes illustrative of the life of the person it contained; and on the top was a recumbent figure or likeness of the deceased. The coffin of Joseph was no doubt of stone.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(1.) THE FEAR. (11.) THE FORGIVENESS. (III.) A GOOD OLD AGE.

I. THE FEAR.—(14.) BURIED, in the cave of Machpelah, still in Hebron, and guarded with fanatic zeal by Mohammedans. (15.) PERADVENTURE, perhaps, (see Notes). (16.) MESSENGER, they seemed to be afraid to go without sending a messenger. (17.) FORGIVE, they had probably never formally asked forgiveness before. (18.) BRETHREN ALSO WENT, having sent the messenger to prepare the way, they follow themselves, to strengthen his plea.

II. THE FORGIVENESS.—(19.) FEAR NOT, Joseph's weeping testified, better than words, to his full reconciliation; AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD? that is, am I God, to whom vengeance belongeth? (21.) FEAR YE NOT, as I came here through God's providence for good, though you did not intend it, so I will care for you now; KINDLY UNTO THEM, literally, "to their hearts," his words affected their hearts.

III. A GOOD OLD AGE.—(23.) THE THIRD GENERATION, that is great-grandchildren. Though he did not attain to the age of his fathers, he was permitted to see his children's children, as his ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—had been. (26.) AN HUNDRED AND TEN

YEARS OLD, man's life ends here with the coffin, the funeral, and the glance into the future life. "There now follows the chasm of four hundred years, until out of the rushes of the Nile there is lifted up a weeping infant in a little reed-formed ark. The age of law begins, which endures for fifteen hundred years.



CARVED FIGURE UPON THE LID OF AN EGYPTIAN SARCOPHAGUS OR COFFIN

The stone cases were of oblong shape, having flat, straight sides, like a box, with a carved or painted lid. Sometimes the figure of the deceased was represented upon the latter in relief, and some were in the form of a king's name. Others were made in the shape of the mummied body, whether of basalt, granite, slate or limestone, numerous specimens of which are to be seen in the British Museum (see accompanying picture). Wooden coffins were common under the Old Empire, but disappeared under the 12th and 13th Dynasties. Under the 18th to the 21st Dynasties at Memphis, granite sarcophagi were in use.—See Wilkinson's "Egypt."

THE CAMPAIGN.

Our workers have not begun the fall campaign as early as usual this year, and consequently the increase in subscriptions over last year is slight, although there is a decided increase. Perhaps this is in some measure due to the lateness of the publication of our prize list, which appeared in last number and this. By reference to the list in the present issue it will be seen that it is made up for both Canada and the United States. We have had much difficulty in making up our prize list to suit both countries, and it was only done by selecting articles that can be purchased on both sides of the line, and arranging to have those for the United States sent from New York promptly. We now have reason to believe that the United States prizes will be sent with the promptness that has characterized the delivery in Canada. Our prize workers will do well to look at the list each issue, for we expect to make additions constantly, and if there is anything not on the list any one would care to work for, by writing to us we will manage, if possible, so that he may have the opportunity.

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VIENNA.—St. Stephen's Cathedral, The Imperial Opera House, The Cursaal in the Town Park, The Danube Canal and Aspen Bridge, The Imperial Castle, The Northern Railway Station.

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