



LESSON V.—NOVEMBER 3.

Death of Joseph

Genesis 1, 15-26. Memory verses 18-21.

Golden Text.

'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.'—Psalm xc., 12.

Lesson Text.

(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, (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 I am 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 swore 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.

Suggestions.

(Condensed from 'Peloubet's Notes.')

At Hebron, Jacob learns that his long-lost son is alive and is the governor of all Egypt. This news is too much for the patriarch, and his heart fails him. He is, however, reassured by a sight of the Egyptian waggons, which Joseph had sent to him loaded with presents. With all its belongings, he takes his journey into Egypt to meet his beloved son. On the way, the Lord encourages him. In Goshen, Joseph visits his father, and, as might be expected, the meeting between the two is very affecting. The governor presents his father and five of his brothers to Pharaoh, who declares that the best of the land is at their disposal. The famine continues over Egypt and the adjacent countries, but Joseph has plenty of corn. Of course, his family is provided for. At the age of 147, Jacob prepares to die. Joseph swears to him that he will bury him in the land of his fathers. The aged pilgrim charges his sons, gives commandment concerning his burial, and yields up the ghost. He is embalmed and buried in the cave of Machpelah, near Hebron. After the funeral Joseph and his brothers return to Egypt.

Joseph Comforts His Brothers.—Vs. 19-21. Am I in the place of God? That is, Am I to act as judge, and punish? Judges are sometimes in Hebrew even called God (as in Ex. xxi., 6; xxii., 8-9; 1 Sam. ii., 25), as exercising his authority.—'Handy Com.' 'Joseph understands, with perfect clearness, that we ought to forgive those who have injured us, that to take revenge is to usurp God's prerogative. No New Testament writer understands this more clearly than he.'—Professor Beecher.

Ye thought evil. Joseph recognizes the enormity of their sin, and it was best that they should not forget it, so that they might

the more clearly understand how wondrously God had wrought. God meant it unto good. 'Joseph forgave, or facilitated forgiveness, by observing the good results of what had seemed so cruel. Good out of evil,—that is the strange history of this world, whenever we learn God's character.' No thanks to you. Your sin dishonored you, though it will honor God. By our intentions, and not by the results, are our actions judged. Forgiveness becomes less difficult, your worst enemy becomes your best friend, if you transmute his evil by good. No one can permanently injure us but ourselves. No one can dishonor us. Joseph was immured in a dungeon; they spat on Christ. Did that sully the purity of the one, or lower the divine dignity of the other?—Roberston.

Nourish.—Joseph thus promises to see that they will want for nothing. His position enabled him to keep this promise, so that the Israelites did not suffer until after his death. Your little ones. Hebrew, 'your tafs,' rendered in the LXX., 'your households,' and in the Syriac, 'your families,' your dependents—its usual translation in that version.—'Handy Com.' And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. This is more than forgiveness: it is rendering good for evil. Another instance of the nobility of Joseph's character.

Joseph's Death.—Vs. 24-26.—I die. Willingly or unwillingly, this is the thought that everyone must entertain some time. Joseph could look forward to his death without a tremor. 'Dying he comforts others, manifests his own faith in God.'—Gray. God will surely visit you. Not in wrath and anger because of your sin, but to fulfil his promises to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Joseph took an oath. . . ye shall carry up my bones from hence. 'Joseph, in faith (Heb. xi., 22) in the promises of God (Gen. lvi., 4), prophesies the Exodus, and commands the removal of his own body accordingly. So strong is his faith in the event, that he does not command them to carry him immediately to Canaan. Or, perhaps he knows that after his death there would be no one with sufficient authority to carry out such a command.'—Alford. 'Joseph says in effect, "Keep my bones in Egypt. Ye shall carry them indeed to Canaan, but not in a mere funeral procession, as the bones of my father have gone. In triumph, not in sadness, shall they go; not as to a grave in a cave, but as to the broad and beautiful land of promise." There was nothing for Joseph to attach his faith to but the simple word of God. And yet, when he is dying, and sees all hope dead around him, he calmly says, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. Of this it is said in Hebrew, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." Well has the inspired writer chosen his illustration,—from the zenith of faith and the nadir of sight.'—Gibson.

Conclusion. Joseph: A Character Study. When those who have left an impress on their times pass away, it is customary to carefully review their life and character for the purpose of handing down to succeeding generations the lesson to be learned therefrom. The character of Joseph belongs to all times and to all lands. How then can we more fittingly close our study of his life than by considering the roots of his character, and, if possible, discover the tap root by which it was built up and sustained? It must be borne in mind that those things which we have seen and admired in Joseph were but the outward manifestations of those things which could not be put on and off, like a dress suit, but which were parts of the man himself. These characteristics were:—

1. Filial devotion. As a boy he loved and obeyed his father. As a man, high in worldly rank, he loved and honored him. The first steps in their downward course were taken by many when they began to disregard the fifth commandment.

2. Absolute honesty. In whatever position Joseph was placed, he was honest. This may seem to be a simple virtue, but oh! how it is lacking to-day!

3. Unselfishness. Another virtue that seems to be going out of fashion. 'Everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost' seems to be the motto of the world.

4. Humility. True, he seems to have had an early consciousness of his coming greatness, and to have spoken about it, but at

every point he gave the glory to God. He regarded himself but the instrument, the wisdom and the power came from the Almighty.

5. Faith. This made all of the foregoing possible.

At this point, an up-to-date American might interpose and say, All well enough, so far as they go, but remember what a difference between these times and those in which Joseph lived. These are not the qualities that go to make a successful man in this age, when electricity has superseded the horses of Egypt. To be sure, times have changed, but Joseph manifested other elements of power, which the business man of to-day might well consider. They were:—

1. Resolution.
2. Enterprise.
3. Faithfulness in little things.
4. Patience.
5. Perseverance.
6. Evenness of disposition.—Taylor.

These qualities would make a successful business or professional man to-day, and if joined to those mentioned in the other list, would make a second Joseph. Why divorce them?

What was the tap root of Joseph's character, and, therefore, the secret of his power? We have not far to search for our answer: He lived in the presence of God. To him, Jehovah was not an impersonality or a far-off deity, but an ever-present inspirer and helper, in whose presence he habitually moved. 'He was not self-poised, but God-poised.'

C. E. Topic.

Sun. Nov. 3.—Topic.—God's leading in our lives.—Psalm 23.

Junior C. E. Topic.**CHRISTIAN LOYALTY.**

Mon., Oct. 28.—The loyal tongue.—Ps. xxiv., 13.

Tues., Oct. 29.—Christian hands.—Eccl. ix., 10

Wed., Oct. 30.—Feet for Christ's service.—Isa. lli., 7.

Thu., Oct. 31.—Jesus in the heart.—Eph. iii., 17.

Fri., Nov. 1.—Our thoughts for Christ.—2 Cor x., 5.

Sat., Nov. 2.—Using eyes for Christ.—1 John i., 1-4.

Sun., Nov. 3.—Topic.—Loyalty to Jesus.—Matt. x., 38-39.

**School Boys and Tobacco.**

It may influence some people to be told that Lord Wolsey, Earl Roberts, General Buller, and Major-General Baden-Powell are all non-smokers. The last named is a propagandist. He has issued a pamphlet condemning juvenile smoking, and a Baden-Powell Non-Smoking League has been organized as the outcome of it. The Liverpool School Board—a no inconsiderable body—has circulated thousands of the pamphlets referred to through the school principals and headmasters, with the object of inducing boys to join the Non-Smoking League.

Edinburgh School Board was one of the first educative assemblies in Scotland to begin a crusade against juvenile cigarette smoking.

Enquiries regarding the effects of the habit were made of headmasters of English schools recently. The headmaster of Perse Grammar School, Cambridge, entirely condemns all smoking on the part of boys, believing that the habit has a very bad effect on their moral development.

Mr. F. W. Rodgers, M.A., headmaster of King Edward VI. School, Chelmsford, declares that a boy smoker is certainly a worse student than the ordinary lad, and is always known, or suspected, from being at the bottom of the class or form. The boy who smokes, according to this master's experience, is equally dull, dense, and generally stupid and indolent.

The headmaster of Portsmouth Grammar