

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXIV.

June 15, 1873.

PROPHETIC BLESSINGS.

Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, and xlix. 8-10.

COMMIT TO MEMORY xix. 10.

PARALLEL PASSAGES, Heb. xi. 21, Isa. xlii. 1.

Read with ch. xlviii. vs. 15, 16, Matt. vi. 31, 32, Jos. xvii. 17, Numb. xxvi. 84, 87; with xlix. 8, Hos. xi. 12, Numb. x. 14; with v. 9, Rev. v. 5; with v. 10, Numb. xxiv. 17, John xix. 15, and John xii. 82.

CENTRAL TRUTH—God's "word is true from the beginning." Ps. cxix. 160. See also Isa. xlii. 10.

INTERNATIONAL TEXT.—The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Gen. xlix. 10.

To understand Jacob's course in bestowing such blessings on Joseph's sons, we have to remember, (1) Rachel was the wife (Gen. xlv. 27), so far as we know, the only wife he meant to marry; and Joseph was her eldest son. He was, in his father's thought, entitled to a double portion. He had personal claims besides, from his saving the family. (2) Reuben, Simeon, and Levi had all done evil in one way or other, and as we see from ch. xlix. 4-6, he was authorized of God to show displeasure with their sin. (3) Joseph having two sons—now eighteen to twenty years old—the double portion naturally comes to them; and Jacob, called "Israel," when strengthening himself—Jacob, in his weakness—makes an effort (v. 2) on his sick bed, when receiving a visit from Joseph and his sons, to give the blessing. Rank, priesthood, and a double share of goods were included (1 Chron. v. 2). Judah obtained rank, Levi the priesthood, and Joseph the double portion, compensating him for all his hardships. The sight of Joseph recalls Rachel, whose death was such a blow, ("Rachel died upon me,"—Murphy.) The interview is formal, solemn, and in a deeply religious spirit.

I. JOSEPH'S DOUBLE PORTION. Consider (a) The mode of blessing. Jacob blind; embraces the young man; Joseph puts them as they were born, so that Jacob's right hand may rest on the elder (1 Kings ii. 19). Jacob changes that, under divine guidance.

Here is the first "laying on of hands," an old, natural method of conveying guilt (see Lev. xvi. 21), favor (Mark v. 23), or office (Acts viii. 19, and 1 Tim. v. 22). The blessing is in the form of prayer. It is also a prophecy.

(b) The substance of the blessing. It hints at three persons in form: the God before whom his fathers walked (Gen. xxvii. 1); the God who fed him (Gen. xxviii. 20); (see 1 Tim. vi. 8); the angel who redeemed him (Gen. xxxii. 30).

Yet there are not three Gods, but one. As Luther noticed, the word "bless" is singular. We see the same idea in Numb. vi. 23-26, and in the apostolic benediction. We do not find formal statements as to the mode of existence of the Divine Being in the Old Testament. The great danger to men was from "Gods many"; but we find language which the doctrine of three persons explains. The manner in which three are one, it is still harder to explain than the manner of "soul, body, and spirit," in ourselves; but the fact of it is revealed. The New Testament is clearer as to this fact than the Old. The blessing puts Joseph's sons among Jacob's. "let my, &c., v. 16. This is its distinction. It includes a numerous seed, described by a word from the enormous increase of fish in the sea.

How was this fulfilled? (a) In the great numbers of Ephraim and Manasseh. See (as above) Numb. xxvi. 34, 37. (b) In the superiority of Ephraim to Manasseh (Numb. i. 33, 36). Ephraim often stands for the ten tribes (Ps. lxxx. 1, 2). Sometimes for all, like Judah. Joshua, the second leader of the nation was of Ephraim.

Learn from this (1) Dependence on God. Jacob feels it now. He is grateful for deliverance from evil (see phrase in the Lord's prayer).

(2) God takes whom He will; Shem before Japheth; Isaac before Ishmael; Jacob before Esau; Judah and Joseph before Reuben; Moses before Aaron; and David before his brothers. We no more understand the why than did Joseph.

This settlement of Joseph's claims, and the adoption of his two sons, as if they were Jacob's, prepares for the blessings of ch. xlix. to Judah's share in which we now turn; because it is the centre, the hope in Israel's mind inherited from his father, and founded on ancient promises. See Gen. xxii. 18, and xxviii. 14.

II. JUDAH'S PRE-EMINENCE: ch. xlix. 8-10.—This blessing promises to the tribe (1) Tenon. "Judah" (i. e., praise, Gen. xxix. 35, a play on the name), "thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." (See the history of this great tribe as in David and Solomon.) All the tribes called by his name at length, Judah, Jews. (2) Great success over enemies, v. 8. (3) Great strength, "lion," able to kill the prey, feed on it securely, and then retire to his lair in the mountains. Hence a lion became Judah's standard. (4) Long possession of power, v. 10. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," which we should read generally as meaning, "Judah shall hold out, and have rulers and law-makers among his sons, till all distinction of nations ceases, by the coming of Shiloh.

This has been, in one form or other, regarded as the advent of the Messiah by Jews and Christians. The exact meaning of the word—which is a now one—has been in dispute. The pupils cannot be expected to know the arguments on the point, but they may be told that two meanings have been given, both referring to the prophecy to Christ.

(1) One reading makes Shiloh a proper name (not unlike Solomon, meaning Peace or Peace-maker, from a verb signifying to rest. So Christ is called Prince of Peace in Isa. ix. 6. Luther and many other good authorities are for this.

(2) Shiloh, a compound word meaning "he whose right it is," this, it is supposed, is quoted by Ezek. xli. 27, which see, and referred to, Gal. iii. 16. We are not careful to settle the point, since all the versions, all the early Christians, all the early Jews referred it to the Messiah.

Objections. (a) It may mean 'Come to Shiloh,' i. e., the tribe. This modern Jews and unbelievers try to support, to get rid of the prophecy. But we have no proof that Shiloh then existed; nothing particular happened there; and the grammar is against it. (b) This prophecy is not quoted in the New Testament. But it would not have had force while the Jews (Judah) still continued as a nation and Jerusalem stood. Its force was for those who see Jerusalem fallen.

The fulfilment is in the dispersion and complete breaking up of the Jews, when the people, Jews and Gentiles began to be gathered to Christ. Gal. iii. 28.

Learn (1) The value of prophecy. Isa. xli. 26. History fulfils it.

(2) All things are for Christ. To Him shall the gathering of the people be.

(3) God is to be trusted for the words yet unfulfilled.

(4) How far reaching is influence—these patriarch's character telling on unborn millions.

ILLUSTRATION.

THE SCEPTRE DEPARTED FROM JUDAH.—How complete was the breaking up of the Jewish state, when by Christianity, the people were being gathered to Christ, may be learned from the eloquent words of Josephus. (Wars of the Jews, Book vi.) "And where is now that great city, the metropolis of the Jewish nation, which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towns to defend it, which could hardly contain the instruments prepared for war; and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it? Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting it? It is demolished to its very foundations, and hath nothing but that monument of its preservation, I mean the camp of those that have destroyed it, which dwells upon its ruins; some unfortunate old men also lie upon the ashes of the temple. Now, who is there that revolves these things in his mind, and yet is able to bear the sight of the scene, though he might live out of danger?"

YOUNG MEN DEPEND ON YOUR OWN EFFORTS.

Fight your own battles. Hoe your own row. Ask no favour of any one, and you will succeed a thousand times better than those who are always beseeching some one's patronage. No one will ever help you as you can help yourself, because no one will be so heartily interested in your affairs. The first step will not be such a long one, perhaps, but, carving your own way up the mountain, you make each one lead to another, and stand firm in that while you hold out still another. Men who have made their fortune are not those who have five thousand dollars given them to start with, but started fair with a well-earned dollar or two. Men who have by their own exertions acquired fame have not been thrust into popularity by puffs, begged or paid for, or given in friendly spirit. They have out-stretched their hands and touched the public heart. Men who win love do their own wooing, and I know a man to fail so signally as one who had induced his affectionate grandmamma to speak a good word for him. Whether you work for fame, for love, for money, or for anything else, work with your hands, heart, and brain. Say "I will" and some day you will conquer. Never let any man have it to say, "I have dragged you up." Too many friends hurt a man more than none at all.—Grace Greenwood.

CHARACTER BETTER THAN KNOWLEDGE.

A prominent minister, speaking of the impressions made on his young mind by two of his early Sunday-school teachers, said of the second: "He was a man of less culture than the first; but of more sweetness. My recollections of him are pleasant. I remember the stories he told me, and I think of him gratefully." Many another scholar estimates his teachers similarly. It is not so much what a teacher knows as what he is, that gives him power in winning the young hearts he would lead aright. The appeal is personal to every Sunday-school teacher, as well as to every other disciple of Jesus, as to his character and conduct: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

PRESBYTERY OF BRUCE.

The Presbytery of Bruce held an adjourned meeting at North Bruce on the 20th inst. The resignation of the Rev. Mr. Straith, of the pastoral charge of Salem Church, Eldershe, was accepted, but said resignation to take effect only when that station shall be provided for by being connected with Chesley or with some other convenient Station. On application from North Bruce it was separated from Centre Bruce, and erected into a pastoral charge. Mr. Straith, the Moderator of their Kirk Session, was authorized to moderate in a call there before the next meeting of Presbytery. They promise a salary of \$600, together with manse for the support of the minister. A memorial from Centre Bruce was read asking for the moderation in a call, stating that they were prepared to raise the sum of \$400 for the support of a minister, and asking the Presbytery either to recommend them to the Home Mission Committee for a supplement of \$200 or to suggest some way by which their congregation might be strengthened. The Presbytery agreed that with a view to the strengthening of the congregation of Centre Bruce by giving more time, the consideration of their petition be deferred until next meeting of Presbytery. The Rev. John Stewart was appointed ad interim Moderator of the Kirk Session of Centre Bruce. The Presbytery of Bruce will hold its next quarterly meeting at Tiverton, on the last Tuesday of July next, at 2 o'clock, p. m.

A. G. FOSBERG, Pres. Clerk.

Our Young Folks.

SHA'N'T AND WONT.

Sha'n't and Wont were two little brothers, Angry, and sullen, and gruff; Try and Will are dear little sisters, One scarcely can love them enough.

Sha'n't and Wont looked down on their noses, Their faces were diamet to see, Try and Will are brighter than roses In June, and as little as the bee.

Sha'n't and Wont were backward and stupid— Little indeed did they know; Try and Will learn something new daily, And seldom are heedless or slow.

Sha'n't and Wont love nothing—no' nothing So much as to have their own way, Try and Will give up to their elders, And try to please others at play.

Sha'n't and Wont came to terrible trouble, Their story is too sad to tell, Try and Will are now at the infant school, Learning to read and to spell.

GUNDA AND THE TIGER.

My papa and mamma lived in India in a very pretty place among the Himalaya Mountains. All round us were the high mountains with their tops white with snow; but down where we lived there was no snow, but beautiful trees, flowers, and green grass. A river ran near the house, that always made a roaring noise tumbling over the stones, and we could see the white foam on it a long way up the hills, until at last it looked like a line of chalk.

Our house was a compound—a large square enclosed by a thick fence, and shaded from the sun by trees. There was a veranda round the house, up to which you went by steps, and all the rooms in the house opened out upon it. There were several other houses in the compound besides the one we lived in. There was one house for cooking in, another for washing; two or three for the servants to live in, for the people in India have a great many black servants—it is too hot there for white people to do any hard work. Then there was the tailor's house, and the shoemaker's (it is a tailor who makes all the ladies' and children's dresses in India.) I had a black nurse—my ayah they are called there—and I was able to speak Hindoostanee before I could speak English. She used to take me up at four o'clock in the morning; and as soon as I had my bath and was dressed, I went for a drive, sometimes with papa or mamma—sometimes with only my bearer, a Hindoo man, who took me out to drive and walk, and sometimes to ride on a little pony up through the hills. I was very fond of my bearer. He and I used to go for walks in the evening, and pick flowers and fruit, and sit by the river. He was dressed in a white muslin dress, and a white muslin turban round his head. He often told me stories about himself when he was a little boy. He had been a heathen—that is one who prays to something else than God. He told me he used to pray to ugly idols made of wood and stone, and thought that they were his gods; that he used to think the river Ganges was a god. He used to believe that the little white Brahmin cows with the hump on their backs were nearly gods. He said when he was little boy in the holy city of Benares, where the cows were allowed to walk through the streets and to eat whatever they liked, the people would not turn them out of their houses if they choose to go in, nor stop them from taking anything they liked; and he told me that these poor people thought that if they could torment themselves a great deal they would please these ugly gods. So some of them would tie up their arms until they became quite useless, or put their bodies into some queer shapes, or stand on one leg until they are quite worn out.

Gunda and I were talking about these things one morning, when we were out before breakfast, sitting by the river; and when we had done, I got on my pony, and we went back to the house, where we were just in time for breakfast. After breakfast, the sun was very hot, and every one lay down to take a sleep; and all the doors were open to let in the air through the house. I was lying on a sofa fast asleep, and my bearer was lying on a mat in the room. The only person awake in the house was the tailor; he was sitting out in the veranda working at a dress for mamma. He was sitting near the nursery door; and the baby was left in the cradle just outside that she might be cool. The tailor was told to mind her. He had been busy for some time, when he looked up, and what did he see coming into the compound? A large tiger! It walked slowly in, as you may have seen a cat do, and came towards the house. The tailor gave a scream and ran in crying out, "A tiger! a tiger!" but he never thought of the poor little baby, but left it out by itself in the veranda. Every body jumped out of their sleep, and ran to make the mats tight, for we had only mats instead of wooden doors, as you have in this country. The noise wakened me, and I was going to cry, when my bearer took my hands in his, and said, "Sahib, you must not be afraid. God will take care of us," and knelt on his mat, and adding my hands, said, "Heavenly Father, take care of us. Save us from the tiger. We ask thee in Jesus' name." Just then mamma came running into the room to see if we were safe. She saw I was there, but not baby. "O! the baby!" she cried; "the baby's outside!"

"Wait," said Gunda, "I'll go for the baby."

"O Gunda! no," cried I, "you'll be eaten," and I caught hold of him, to keep him from going; but Gunda said, "Sahib, God will save the baby and me."

Just then some one called out, "The tiger is in the veranda." Gunda pushed aside the mat, and ran out, while I dropped on my knees, as I had seen him do, and asked God to save Gunda and the baby. I had hardly done, when Gunda ran in, holding the baby safe in his arms. The tiger was in the veranda, but never looked at Gunda; God saved him; he had hardly got inside the mat, and made it fast when he heard the tiger spring upon the baby's cradle and hit

it over. We all stayed very quiet, until at last we saw the tiger go slowly out of the compound, as he had come in. When papa came home and heard how Gunda had saved his baby, he took his hand and said, "Gunda, I will never forget your kindness. You risked your life for my child's. May God bless you."

"O!" said Gunda, "It was not a great thing for me to do. I was not afraid. I knew God would take care of me. Did he not shut the mouths of the lions when Daniel was put in their den; and could he not shut the tiger's mouth, and save your child and me too?"

But we could not go outside of the compound while there was a tiger near; and it would not have been safe; and we thought it very hard to have to stay there always. Papa and some other gentlemen went out every day with guns and dogs to look for the tiger, and at last they came home one day and said they had shot him. They got him skinned, and laid the spotted skin on the floor, where it looked so pretty, and very often poor little baby sat on it, but little thinking how nearly she had been eaten by the same tiger, only that God took care of her.

Temperance.

TOBACCO GIVEN UP.

During the progress of the great revival in the north of Ireland, there were many things which marked the power of the Spirit's work. It is by no means unusual to meet even Christian men, who have become so enslaved by an appetite for tobacco, that they "cannot give it up." This is a sad confession, and the frequency with which it is made is one very strong argument against the use of the article by Christian men. If Christ has made them free, they ought not to suffer themselves to be brought into bondage by any bodily appetite. The body ought to be kept under, and brought into subjection. Thus thought the Apostle Paul, and thus will think all who possess his spirit.

During the revival in Donegal, it reached Donaghmore, where the use of tobacco prevailed generally, and where the pastor had in vain sought to break its power. He had found, as so many others have found, how hard it is to argue, even with Christian men, against the power of a dominant appetite. But during the revival, he said that as many as forty persons had given up the use of the article. One man, in middle life, took him aside one day and said to him: "I wished to say to you that I have given up the use of tobacco altogether; and I have resolved, by the grace of God, to give every penny it would have cost me to the missions, and to spend every moment I must have spent in smoking in reading my Bible."

If a revival were to visit our land, and produce on the mind of every Christian such an effect as on this man of Donegal, what an addition to the funds for missions, and what an increase of Bible reading there would be!—National Baptist.

THE TYRANNY OF APPETITE.

In Mrs. Stowe's story, entitled "My Wife and I," there occurs a thrilling passage regarding the degrading vice of a drunkard's appetite, which reveals its desperate tyranny. It is where Bolton is giving his reasons why he dare not marry, and it is as follows:

"One sip would flash to the brain like fire, and then all fear, all care, all conscience would be gone, and not one glass but a dozen would be inevitable. Then you might have to look for me in some of those dens to which I am possessed of the devil when the fit is on them, and where they rave and tear and cut themselves until the madness is worn out. This has happened to me after long periods of self-denial, and self-control, and I illusive hope. It seems to me that my experience is like a man whom some cruel fiend condemns to go through all the agonies of drowning, over and over again—the dark plunge, the mad struggle, the submersion, the horror, the agony, the clutch at the shore, the weary clamber of the steep rocks, the sense of relief, recovery and hope, only to be wrenched off and thrown back to struggle, and sink again. If I had fallen dead, after that first glass of wine I had tasted it would have been thought a horrible thing, but it would have been better for my mother, better for me, than to have lived as I did."

ONLY TIGHT.

"How flushed, how weak he is! What is the matter with him?"

"Only tight."

"Tight?"

"Only tight"—man's best and greatest gift, his intellect, degraded, the only power that raises from brute creation trodden down under the form of a debasing appetite.

"Only tight"—the gentle sister, whose strongest love through life has been given to her handsome, talented brother, shrinks with contempt and disgust from his embrace and brushes away the hot, impure kiss he prints upon her cheek.

"Only tight"—and his young bride stops in the glad dance she is making to meet him, and checks the welcome on her lips to gaze in terror on the reeling form and flushed face of him who was the god of idolatry.

"Only tight"—as the father's face grows dark and sad, as with a bitter sigh he swoops over the sleeping form of his first-born.

He has brought sorrow to all these affectionate hearts; he has opened the door to a fatal indulgence; he has brought himself down to a level with brutes, he has tasted, exciting the appetite to crave the poisonous draught again, he has fallen from high and noble manhood to babbling idocy and heavy stupor; brought grief to his mother, distrust to his sister, almost despair to his bride, and bowed his father's head with sorrow, but blame him not, for he is only tight.

Sir Henry Thompson, one of the most eminent physicians of England, and known as the friend of Professor Tyndal, has written a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he says:—

"I have long had the conviction that there is no greater cause of evil, moral and physical, in this country than the use of alcoholic beverages. I do not mean by this that extreme indulgence which produces drunkenness. The habitual use of fermented liquors to an extent far short of what is necessary to produce that condition, and such as is quite common in all ranks of society, injures the body and diminishes the medical power to an extent which I think few people are aware of. Such, at all events, is the result of observation during more than twenty years of professional life devoted to hospital practice, and to private practice in every rank above it. Thus I have no hesitation in attributing a very large proportion of some of the most dangerous and fatal maladies which come under my notice, as well as those which every medical man has to treat, to the ordinary and daily use of fermented drink taken in the quantity which is conventionally deemed moderate. Whatever may be said in regard to its evil influence on the mental and moral faculties, as to the fact above stated, I feel that I have a right to speak with authority; and I do so solely because it appears to me a duty, especially at this moment, not to be silent on a matter of such extreme importance. My main object is to express my opinion as a professional man in relation to the habitual employment of fermented liquor as a beverage. Let if I ventured one step further it would be to express a belief that there is no single habit in this country which so much tends to deteriorate the qualities of the race, and so much disqualifies it for endurance in that competition which in the nature of things must exist, and in which struggle the prize of superiority must fall to the best and the strongest."

It will be noticed that this testimony comes hard upon beer drinkers. It is to fermented liquors and the moderate use of them that this great physician attributes the mischief.

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

The people of Japan are beginning to complain about the centralization of the power of the government. The native Christians imprisoned at Hiorura have been released. In the Provinces of Jetszbb and Prusho the farmers are rebellious, in consequence of the action of the government in taking down the edicts against Christianity. There has been much fighting, but the insurgents have accomplished nothing.

Bismarck seems to have no intention of discontinuing his proscription of the Roman Catholics in Germany. The Government of the Empire, it is said, has resolved to compel the Redemptorists, Lazarists, and the Congregations of the Holy Ghost and Sacred Heart, as well as the occupants of close convents, from the country within the coming six months.

The Rappoldman mission lately established by the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland now consists of eleven missionaries, ordinary and medical, two English teachers, and thirteen native agents. The Christian community numbers 192, of whom seventy five are communicants. There are 408 famine orphans under the mission, and 2,432 boys and girls in its fifty-two schools, chiefly vernacular.

The property of the Auburn Theological Seminary is worth \$300,000, and doubts are expressed whether the title to the real estate at Auburn, and possibly to some of the invested funds, would not be invalidated by the proposed removal to Aurora.

The United States Commissioner of Education estimates that the entire amount of benefactions for educational purposes in the United States during the last two years is \$18,000,000. Donations to theological institutions last year amounted to \$1,155,556.

From the Nonconformist's interesting summary of what has been accomplished by American missions in Turkey during the past forty years we quote as follows:—"Figures but imperfectly represent moral influence, but experienced readers will understand what is implied in such facts as these: that up to the present time the Americans have established in Turkey 222 common schools, have founded 76 churches, have educated and licensed 110 pastors and teachers, have opened 200 preaching stations, have founded 4 theological colleges, have set up 11 girls' schools, and around these various institutions have gathered a Protestant population of over 20,000 souls. They have circulated in the various languages of the empire 250,000 copies of the Sacred Scriptures, besides 500,000 other religious and useful books, many of them translations of European favorites and classics, and a host of college and school books, such as grammars and works on arithmetic, astronomy, algebra; physiology, mental science, and domestic economy." The same article also refers to Robert College, Constantinople, where 400 students are instructed in English and Italian into English literature; to the college at Beirut, where Arabic is the language of the institution, spreading medical science and Christian knowledge over Syria, and makes an earnest appeal to its readers in behalf of the projected college at Aintab, where Turkish is to be the common language of the institution.