

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

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

LESSON IV.

OCT. 24.]

JACOB'S PREVAILING PRAYER.

Gen. 32: 9-12; 22-30.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 26-30.

9. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

12. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

22. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me.

27. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said Jacob.

28. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke 18: 1.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Believing prayer prevails with God.

INTRODUCTION.—Jacob reached Haran, and was well received by Laban. He was, however, sharply dealt with in serving for a wife, and served for fourteen years to gain Rachel; had secretly left for Canaan; was pursued by Laban; made a covenant of peace with him, had a vision of angels at Mahanaim: and now was alarmed by the approach of his brother Esau, whom he had not met since his flight from the house in Beersheba.

NOTES.—JAB-BOK, this stream falls into the Jordan from the east, about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Its modern name is Wady Zurka, that is, the "blue," from its deep blue mountain water; at the ford it is about ten yards wide.—IS-RA-EL, "prince of God," a name quite in contrast with that of Jacob, or Supplanter, and one which was to apply to his descendants.—PE-N-EL or PE-NU-EL, "face of God," situated near the ford of Jabbok, about forty miles from Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(1.) PLEADING GOD'S PROMISES. (11.) WRESTLING PRAYER. (11.) BLESSING OBTAINED.

I. PLEADING GOD'S PROMISES.—(9.) GOD OF MY FATHER, the Almighty heard and helped Abraham and Isaac, and had promised Jacob to deal well with him; hence the confidence of this appeal. (10.) NOT WORTHY, the coming of Esau must have reminded Jacob of his sin of deception years before. (11.) DELIVER ME, I PRAY THEE, in peril men are often driven to God, and God mercifully hears them, though unworthy. (12.) THOU SAIDST, God's word can never fail, so he pleads God's promises. "This is a beautiful specimen of all hearty prayer, and has all the attributes of real prayer."—Gorman.

II. WRESTLING PRAYER.—(22-23.) PASSED... JABBOK, the Patriarch did all in his power to secure safety first, then sought God's help. (24.) ALONE, he wrestled until the morning; mark the firmness displayed; A MAN, this mysterious person is called an "angel" in Hosea 12: 4, and in the following verse, "the Lord of Hosts." (25.) I WILL NOT LET THEE GO, EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME, persevering prayer brings a blessing. (See Central Truth.) Jacob appears to have known the character of the person with whom he wrestled, and therefore his impotency.

III. BLESSING OBTAINED.—(27.) THY NAME, he was called "Supplanter;" ISRAEL, the supplanter's name becomes "prince with God;" BLESSED HIM THERE, His name He would not give, but adding a blessing, indicative of His character; so now his people are blest, "Heaven comes down our souls to greet, and glory crowns the mercy-seat." (30.) PENIEL, see Notes; Jacob wished to see God face to face.

I WILL deal WELL WITH thee.

LESSON V.

OCT 31.]

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

Gen. 37: 1-5, 23-36.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 32-35.

1. And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Billhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colors.

4. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

23. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him;

24. And they took him, and cast him into a pit, and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

26. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27. Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29. And Reuben returned unto the pit; and he beheld, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

31. And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood:

32. And they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

33. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down unto the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Who is able to stand before envy?—Prov. 27: 4.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Sin destroys natural affection.

NOTES.—THE GENERATIONS, history, narrative, or account of the lives and actions of Jacob and his sons. The preceding chapter gives the most complete genealogy of Jacob's family which is to be found in the Bible.—ISH-MEELITES, "a caravan" the descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar. They have always led a roving life, wild and predatory. They are to this day the untamed though tributary masters of the desert.—MID-I-AN-ITES, "strife, contention;" strictly the descendants of Midian, son of Abraham and Keturah. They were idolaters, but entreprising as traders, carrying on commercial business by caravans. They often led the children of Israel to worship their gods.—OFFICER, a chamberlain or courtier (Esther 1: 10). These chamberlains were important and influential persons, like members of a cabinet now.—CAPTAIN, chief marshal, or head of the executioners. The body-guard of the king of Egypt sometimes consisted of one thousand men.—COAT OF MANY COLORS, "a garment distinguished for small spots, stripes, or fringes."—Taylor Lewis. But Professor Green says it should read, "A long tunic with sleeves." "Joseph's history is amplified beyond that of any of the patriarchs hitherto."—Lange.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(1.) ENVY. (11.) CRUELTY. (11.) LYING.

I. ENVY.—(2.) JOSEPH BROUGHT, Joseph, with fidelity, told his father of the sins of his brothers. (4, 5.) HATED HIM, this hatred and jealousy, caused by the father's special love for Joseph, showed their evil hearts; COAT (see Notes); DREAM... HATED HIM MORE, Joseph's frankness may be admired, though his prudence, if he knew the meaning of his dreams, seems quite below the other qualities of his character.

II. CRUELTY.—(23.) STRIPT, first they robbed him of the beautiful coat which was a token of his father's regard. (24.) CAST HIM INTO A PIT, this was Reuben's suggestion, to save his brother's life. (25.) THEY SAT DOWN TO EAT BREAD, this shows their heartless cruelty. (26.) JUDAH now intercedes for his brother, and pleads that the youth's life be spared. (28.) SOLD JOSEPH, for twenty pieces (there were no coined pieces; these must have been bars weighed), as a slave, little caring for the life of slavery and suffering into which they had consigned him. (29.) REUBEN... RENT HIS CLOTHES, this shows the sincerity of his love for Joseph, and his desire to save him.

III. LYING.—(30.) CHILD IS NOT, Reuben appears to have been kept in ignorance of the fate

of Joseph. (31.) DIPPED THE COAT, to deceive the father by acts rather than words. (32.) THIS HAVE WE FOUND, this was untrue, they had taken it from Joseph; KNOW NOW WHETHER IT BE THY SON'S COAT OR NO, not our brother's but "thy son's." Then followed the sorrow of their father. (34.) MANY DAYS, because of the act of those envious, cruel, lying sons. (35.) ROSE UP TO COMFORT, the weeping father refused comfort from them.

JOSEPH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST.—"Inasmuch as Israel's history is a typical history of Christ, and Christ's history the typical history of the Church, so is Joseph a type of Christ himself. What he suffered from his brethren, and which God's decree turned to his own and his nation's salvation, is a type of Christ's sufferings, caused by His people, but which God's decree turned to the salvation of the world, including, finally, the salvation of Israel itself."—DeWicsh.

"Jesus Christ is typified in Joseph, the beloved of his father, sent by his father to his brethren, the innocent one sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver, and then becoming their Lord, their Saviour, the Saviour of those who were aliens to Israel, the Saviour of the world,—all of which would not have been if they had not cherished the design of destroying him, if they had not sold and rejected him. Joseph, the innocent one, in prison with two malefactors—Jesus on the cross between two thieves; Joseph predicts favorably to the one, but death to the other; Jesus saves the one, whilst he leaves the other in condemnation. Thus has the Church ever regarded Joseph's history."—Pascal.

ENVY LOVE

CAUSED THE BRETHREN TO HATE STRIP SELL

THE FATHER TO LOVE CLOTHE MOURN FOR

JOSEPH

THE OLIVET SHEPHERD.

I was at Jerusalem, and painting a view of the city from the Mount of Olives. Olivet is a higher hill than those on which the city of Jerusalem is built; the deep valley of the Kedron separates Jerusalem from Olivet. No water comes down the brook Kedron now, it has been so much filled up with rubbish. On the slopes of Olivet shepherds feed their flocks, though some parts of the hillside are cultivated with olive plantations and patches of corn-land. I became great friends with one of these shepherds, and he used to watch me paint. He was much interested, and he said he liked to see me "write down the city;" they have no idea of pictures, thinking it writing. When I took my lunch I left my camp-stool, and sat under a small olive-tree a few yards away from my picture, and always gave part of my lunch to the shepherd. I would give him some bread or an orange; he would take those and eat them. I never offered him meat; he would have refused that, for fear the flesh might be pork. The Arabs are like Jews in that respect; they never eat pork, and have a horror of it.

One day when we were under the tree I saw one of the sheep go up to my easel and rub himself against it. I was in great fear that it would upset my picture, so I said to the shepherd, "Go, drive that sheep away;" but he did not leave my side and only called out a name. The moment the sheep heard the call he left my easel and came to the shepherd. I was so astonished, and said to him, "Do you know your sheep by name?" He said, "Yes, all." So I said, pointing to one which was some distance off, "What is the name of that one?" He called out a name; that sheep came. I tried him with several others, and they each came as they were called. So ever afterward I used to give him some bread, every day, and get him to call out the name of some sheep; and when it came he gave it some of the bread. They were very fond, too, of orange-peel, and would eat that when he gave it to them. This sort of thing went on every day that I was on the Mount of Olives painting that picture.

Now read the tenth chapter of St. John; see how often our Lord compares himself to a shepherd, a "good" shepherd, who calls his sheep by name, and they know him and follow him. So you see when our Lord said those things to the people, they would quite understand all his meaning, for they would so often have seen the same thing done by shepherds about. Our Lord was very fond of comparing Himself to a shepherd, and those who loved Him to sheep, or lambs or "little" children because they are both so innocent, and want ever so much care and love, and have no strength or knowledge of their own.—Henry A. Harper, in Sunday Magazine.

SAVING THE FRAGMENTS.

I remember a busy man who had very little time for reading or study, but whose mind was a perfect storehouse of information on almost every subject.

"How does it happen that you know so much more than the rest of us?" I asked him one day.

"Oh?" said he, "I never had time to lay in a regular stock of learning, so I save all the bits that come in my way, and they count up a good deal in the course of a year."

His example is worthy of imitation.—Ez.

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