

which the Presbytery agreed to Mr. Aull's translation, that gentleman having intimated his willingness to accept the call. In the evening a Presbyterial visitation was held in Knox Church, and next forenoon in Stanley street Church, both of which congregations were found to be in a satisfactory condition. The following minute was adopted in reference to Mr. Aull's removal to Palmerston: "It is with no ordinary sense of the solemnity of the situation that the Presbytery now record their resolution to agree to the translation of Mr. Aull from the pastoral charge of Innerkip and Ratho to Palmerston, and it is with much regret that they contemplate the breaking of the tie that binds him outwardly to his people and to this Presbytery. His residence of ten years among them has furnished many opportunities for the manifestation of his high excellence as a man and as a minister. It is therefore with much pleasure that they now look back to the solid amount of success which has attended his labours as a pastor, to the important services which he has rendered to the Presbytery in the carrying on of their ordinary business, and particularly to his zealous services and labours in connection with the Home Mission work carried on within their bounds. In such circumstances they can only reconcile themselves to the separation when they think that he is leaving a field of labour where he has made proof of his ministry, to enter upon one where his opportunities of going forth bearing precious seed will be abundant, and to which the needs of the people have appeared to him as an earnest call in the providence of God. The congregations which are losing his services they commend to the Chief Shepherd. Their prayer for him, in the new sphere of labour on which he is about to enter, is that great success may crown his ministry, that the light of the Lord's countenance may shine upon him, and that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit may accompany his ministrations."

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XLVII.

Nov. 21, 1880. } JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN. { Gen. xlv. 30-34; xlv. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."—Rom. xii. 21.

HOME READINGS.

M. Gen. xli. 41-57. Review of Last Lesson.
Tu. Gen. xlii. 1-38. Joseph's Brethren sent to Egypt.
W. Gen. xliii. 1-34. Their Second Visit.
Th. Gen. xlii. 1-34. The Brethren in Joseph's House.
F. Gen. xlv. 1-15. Joseph and his Brethren.
S. Rom. xii. 9-21. "Overcome Evil with Good."
Sab. Acts vii. 6-18. Joseph Chosen by God.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The famine described in our last lesson, extending to Canaan, compelled Jacob to send ten of his sons to Egypt for supplies.

On arriving in that country and being ushered into the presence of the great man who for the time was the actual ruler of it, they did not recognize in him their brother Joseph—the change from youth to manhood, the rich dress and surroundings, and the fact that he spoke the language of Egypt and conversed with them through an interpreter, sufficiently account for this—but Joseph knew them; and he immediately began a course of action towards them by means of which he could ascertain whether they had repented of their former deeds, or were still the treacherous and unprincipled men he had once found them.

He affected to take them for spies, and detained one of their number (Simeon) as a hostage until they should prove the truth of their story by bringing their youngest brother (Benjamin) whom, they said, they had left at home with their father.

The famine continuing, Jacob's sons soon found themselves under the necessity of paying a second visit to Egypt, and with much difficulty induced their father to part for a time with the darling of his old age.

When Joseph saw his own full brother—the son of his mother as well as of his father—he was so much affected that he found it necessary to retire in order to weep; but he soon recovered himself, invited all his brothers to a feast, and sent them away, as he had done before, with plentiful supplies of grain, and the money that they had paid for it restored in their sacks' mouths.

He also caused his own silver cup to be placed in Benjamin's sack, and afterwards despatched officers in pursuit to accuse him of stealing it, and to bring him back. This he did in order to test his brethren's affection for Benjamin and for their father.

They stood the test; the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; his brothers did not forsake him, but identified themselves with him in his misfortune, and the mournful cavalcade returned to the city to meet imprisonment or death, they knew not which.

Once more, filled with fear and anxiety, they stood before the stern "lord of the land" and Judah (through an interpreter of course) addressed to him the touching appeal

with the closing words of which our present lesson opens.

The lesson topics are: (1) *Judah's Plea for Benjamin*, (2) *Joseph Revealed*, (3) *Injury Forgiven*, (4) *Providence*.

I. JUDAH'S PLEA FOR BENJAMIN.—Chap. xlv. vers. 30-34. This speech is much admired by critics in literature.

Now therefore. Judah in the previous part of his address, had told of Jacob's continued mourning for the son whom he had lost many years before; of his love for Benjamin, whom he regarded as the only remaining child of his beloved Rachel, and of the difficulty that had been experienced in persuading him to agree even to a temporary separation; and now he forcibly expresses his conviction of the serious result to Jacob if Benjamin should not return with his brethren.

The lad. He must have been over twenty years of age—perhaps thirty—but Judah was now an old man, and it was quite natural for him to use such an expression in speaking of his youngest brother.

His life is bound up in the lad's life. Benjamin could not be injured without hurting Jacob.

When he seeth that the lad is not with us . . . he will die. That was Judah's opinion, and it was well-founded; but this was the same Judah that sold his brother for twenty pieces of silver, and by so doing brought grief upon his father in other days? What was it to him if his father should die? Yes, it is the same Judah, but his character is changed. Perhaps the "stony heart" had been taken away and a "heart of flesh" substituted (Ezekiel xi. 19).

Thy servant became surety for the lad. See chap. xlii. 9. It was only when Judah became responsible for Benjamin's safety that Jacob consented to let him go. He paid no attention to Reuben's stupid offer—"slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee." No doubt Jacob knew which of his sons he could depend upon.

In addressing superiors the Jews used "thy servant" instead of the pronoun "I," or the pronoun "me."

Let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord. "Good for Judah!" says some little boy—yes, it was remarkably good for Judah, and it goes to support the theory that a radical change had taken place in his character.

II. JOSEPH REVEALED. Chap. xlv. vers. 1-4. A paragraph from the "National S. S. Teacher" will assist us here.

"He wept aloud. The heroic self-sacrifice of Judah broke down all Joseph's efforts at self-control. All the while he had desired to take them all to his heart. His aim only had been to find out whether they really were worthy. He had had to contend with his own strong impulses ever since he had beheld the face of Benjamin, but now his emotions had become too strong for further repression, and, before they should sweep the barriers entirely away, he ordered all but his brethren to leave the room. He desired that no one should behold the holy sight of their reconciliation nor learn of the treachery which his brethren had shewn to himself. But as yet all of his actions were enigmatical to his brothers. They did not know why all the spectators of their interview were sent out, nor why he was weeping. Into their minds had dawned no hint of his relationship to them."

I am Joseph. These words must have fallen with startling effect upon the ears of Joseph's brethren. They were uttered in their native tongue, by one whom they had up till that moment regarded as a foreigner, and somewhat of a capricious tyrant withal; but they carried the evidence of their truth along with them, for the name "Joseph" had not once been mentioned; they had invariably spoken of him as the "one" who "was not," or "the brother" that was dead. Somewhat in this way, sinners come to Jesus pleading for a little forbearance, and perhaps regarding Him as a somewhat unreasonable lawgiver, and find, instead of an exacting tyrant, a loving Brother, ready to take them to His heart.

Doth my father yet live? Had not Joseph already asked that question and received an answer to it? Not in that form; he had asked questions regarding one whom he called "your father, the old man of whom ye spake;" but now, having thrown off all disguise, there was nothing to hinder him from using the expression "my father" in speaking of Jacob, and he could not deny himself the luxury of doing so.

III. INJURY FORGIVEN. Ver. 5. No wonder that Joseph's brethren were troubled at his presence. It was almost as if one whom they had killed should rise from the dead to accuse them. Joseph's time for revenge had come, but such a thought was foreign to his breast. He forgave them freely. He "heaped coals of fire upon their heads." He returned them good for evil. He even became their advocate, and endeavoured, in his generosity, to convince them that they had done him a material service when they sold him into bondage. Of course Joseph was perfectly well aware that his brethren's action in selling him, and in deceiving their father as to his fate, was morally wrong, independent of its results; but he had already (chap. xlii. 21-23) overheard them expressing among themselves their deep contrition for that action; he plainly perceived that some at least, perhaps all, of them were changed for the better, and so, without saying anything at all about the moral aspect of their deed, he wished them no longer to grieve over it as an injury done to himself personally.

IV. PROVIDENCE. Vers. 6-8. "This story of Joseph," says the "Westminster Teacher," "illustrates the truth of Providence. God always looks far ahead and has His great plans working out, in and through all our little broken plans. He even takes men's sins and follies and beautifully works them into the great design of love and mercy which he is executing for His people. When those envious men sold their brother, a mere lad, as a slave to the passing caravan, they intended only to get him out of their way. But God took the friendless lad into His own care. As Luther says, they sold him, but God bought him for His own good purposes. He trained him for thirteen years in serfdom and in prison, and then he became the deliverer, not of Egypt only,

but especially of his own father's house. So it comes about in the end that the very crime of these brothers was made to work for good. How it should strengthen our faith in Providence to have this glimpse inside the veil! Men go on in their madness, committing cruelties and sins, intent only upon their own evil purposes. But all the while there is an unseen hand that is secretly guiding, restraining, overruling, so that in the end the issue is good."

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

LESSON VII.

The Crisis of the Journeys.

There are places in the journeys that are uneventful—Dophkah, Alush.—Num. xxxiii. 12-14.

I. MEMORABLE REPHIDIM—PLACES OF REST.

(1) *Rephidim Rest*.—The peace and rest this place was fitted to give was broken up by the people

Chiding Moses.—Exod. xvii. 3.

Tempting God—proving Him with evil.—Exod. xvii. 2; James i. 13-14.

(2) *Rephidim Rebellion*.—Against Moses—"They be almost ready to stone me." Against God—"Is the Lord God among us or not?"

(3) *Rephidim Rock*.—The Lord's merciful and sovereign position on the top of the rock. Behold Me, standing before thee; there upon the rock.—Exod. xvii. 6.

(a) The special directions given to Moses.—Exod. xvii. 5. Go on ahead of the people to the rock Horeb; take thy rod that smote the waters of Egypt; take the elders of Israel with thee.

(b) This is to be distinguished from the rock-smiting in Num. xx.

(c) To this miraculous supply of water Paul alludes.—I Cor. x 4; Jno. vii. 37.

(d) The Rephidim rock is a type of Christ.

(e) *Rephidim Conflict with Amalek*.—This is the first battle fought by the Israelites—not in defiance but in defence.—Deut. xxv. 17-19.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau.—Gen. xxxvi. 12. Amalek was the common name of their king, as Pharaoh of Egypt. A perpetual curse lay on Amalek because of their wicked assault. Since Amalek is against the throne of Jehovah, and thus against His kingdom and people, therefore Jehovah is against Amalek from generation to generation.—Exod. xvii. 16.

(a) Joshua appears for the first time as Moses' chief minister—receives his commission and authority to get together a company of brave men and go against this heartless invader.

(b) Joshua's encouragement. Moses on the hill of observation—has with him the rod, the symbol of his commission. The uplifted and upheld arms of prayer.

The Means of Every Moral Victory.

1. Brave men led by a wise commander.
2. Faithfully holding by the rod of truth.
3. Wrestling with the God of power and victory.

The victory is ordered to be written and rehearsed.—Exod. xvii. 14.

The victory is devoutly acknowledged by erecting an altar.—Exod. xvii. 15.

(5) *Rephidim Re-unions and Counsels*—

(a) The Midianites were descendants of Midian the son of Abraham (Gen. xxv. 2). Hence their knowledge of the true God, and their interest in Israel, as contrasted with the wickedness of Amalek.

(b) The meeting and mutual rejoicing over all that God had wrought.—Exod. xviii. 5-12. "It is most probable that during the eleven months and twenty days of the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, there were frequent interviews between Moses and his relations by marriage, as they were in the immediate neighbourhood."—Murphy. Read Num. x. 29-32.

(c) There was wisdom outside the camp

of Israel. Exod. xviii. 17.

Shewn in a distribution of responsibility

and work. " " 18.

Shewn in a gradation of duties. " " 21.

Shewn in a change of methods. " " 20.

Shewn in the fact that God was consulted. " " 23.

"This is the ideal of Presbyterian government."—Caird.

II. PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE LAW.

The host has removed to the Desert of Sinai. Preparing to be taken and to enter into covenant with God.

(1) The message from God.—Exod. xix. 3-6.

The elders are convened.— " " 8.

The divine purpose is presented, and obedience promised.

(2) The cleansing of the camp, ceremonially and really, to make them a kingdom of priests, an holy nation. Separation from sin. Separation to God. No time to be lost. "Be ready against the third day."

(3) Repeated warnings against touching the mount; with the view of impressing the people with their defilement relatively and really.

(4) The descent of the Lord in the fire, as his appearance to Moses at the bush.—Deut. xxxiii. 2-4; Exod. xix. 12-21. The ascent of Moses to God.—Exod. xx. 21; xix. 20. The law was uttered in the hearing of the people and written on two slabs of stone.—Exod. xxiv. 12.

This law embraces "the fundamentals of the faith." The giving of the ten words is the true crisis in the Old Testament; the starting point of all religious systems and of all true civilization; they form a decisive epoch in the history of the human race, and are therefore the most important event in universal history.—Matt. v. 17-18. "The *torah*," the law or finger pointer of all human duty. There is a threefold division of the law: Moral—dealing specially with the conscience and the life. Civil—dealing with the relations of life in society. Ceremonial—dealing with sacred places, services, ordinances and persons.

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