

For the Sabbath School.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON X.—MARCH 11.—GEN. XXVIII., 10-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, I am with thee and will keep thee."—Gen. xxviii., 18.

EXPLANATORY—THE FLIGHT FROM HOME.—In our last lesson we saw Jacob not only taking advantage of his twin brother in a sharp bargain for his birthright, but also obtaining possession of it by fraud. It had been promised him, and he had bought it legally for a mere song, taking advantage of his brother's weakness and needs. He thought it was his, and without faith to trust in God for the fulfilment of his prophecy, and without love to present the case fairly to his father and his brother, he gained by trickery what he might have had honestly. He now began to feel the curse that clung to his blessing. "It is an awful thing for a man to swap home, friends, station, respectability, and character for the first place in an old man's will."

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth. A stairway rather than a ladder, connecting earth and heaven. "A towering elevation, as of hill piled on hill, consisting of ledges of rocks, serving as steps by which it might be ascended, would correspond far better with the meaning of the word than a solitary, narrow, unsupported ladder, offering no seemingly footing for ascending and descending angels." "In approaching Bethel, the hillsides presented frequently such an exact resemblance to the steps of a stair, that it may have been from them that the vision of Jacob's dream was borrowed." It has been thought by some that this vision was suggested to Jacob as he lay upon his pillow of stones in the twilight, and saw the ranges of hills rising one above another, till the distant mountains seemed to join the sky. All dark below, they grew brighter as they rose into the dawning rays, and the farthest peaks gleamed in the morning.

THE PILLOW OF STONES.—V. 11. Lighted upon a certain place. Literally, "lighted on the place." The definite article probably indicates that it was the well-known place afterwards mentioned and the one where his grandfather Abraham had built an altar (12: 8). It was near Bethel, about fifty-five miles north from Beer-sheba. And he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows. The "stones of that place" are still numerous enough to accomodate an army of Jacobs.

Pillows of stone were but an outward expression of Jacobs feelings at this time. Often from a pillow of stones come the brightest visions of the soul. From weariness and pain and trouble arise the steps that lead to heaven. This is finely expressed in the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

THE COVENANT OF CONSECRATION.—Vs. 16-22.—"Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." The drift of his exclamation was that the Lord had been especially present to him where he little thought of meeting him. God is often near us when we do not expect him.

"This is none other but the house of God." In whatever place the soul of man feels the presence and power of God, there is the house of God.

LESSONS FROM JACOB'S VISION.—"Unconscious providences," unseen guidance. "God's hand in history."

Sin spoils a home. A single act of deception or of meanness will sometimes put an end to all the love and joy and peace of a household.

"This whole incident makes a special appeal to those who are starting in life." Make a new start in life.

Imperfect lives are of two kinds; (1) like Esau's, moving in the wrong direction, but with eddies and incidents of good, (2) like Jacob's, tending in the right direction, but with eddies of error.

Visions of good, lofty ideals of what we may become, promises and hopes, are inspirations and motives to a better life. God's goodness leads us to repentance.

Christian Endeavour.

MISSIONARY PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, MARCH 11.—Systematic Beneficence; Why and How Much, Mal. iii. 7-12. It is as needful that the Christian should give systematically, if he would give in accordance with scriptural teaching, as that he should give liberally and with cheerfulness. It is strange that many people are so scrupulously exact in business with men, should be so careless and unsystematic in the business of the Lord. The Holy Spirit speaking by Paul, says, "Let all things be done decently and in order," (1. Cor. xiv. 40.) and surely this injunction applies as much to our giving as to anything else. There are some Christians who have opened an account with God, and in it regularly laid aside a definite proportion of their income for the work of Christ. A certain young woman in service in Toronto determined thus to set apart and consecrate to God a portion of her wages every month. No sooner had she carried this determination into effect than her mistress raised her wages, unasked, exactly the amount of her offering. Thus generously does God repay his children. The question, "How much shall I give?" cannot be answered by any fixed rule. In Old Testament times God asked a tenth from his people, but to-day He leaves it to themselves to give as he has prospered them. If you carry that proportion out to its logical conclusion it will mean *everything*, and I never yet met a Christian who had done so, who lived to regret his action. Lay the matter before God, settle it honestly between him and yourself; but whatever you give, do as did the Macedonians, first give your own selves also, 2. Cor. viii. 5. Reference passages:—Exodus xxiii. 15; xxv. 2; Lev. xix. 5; 1. Chron. xxix. 11; Prov. iii. 9; xi. 24; xiii. 7; Isa. xxxii. 8; Luke, vi. 38; Acts. xx. 35; Rom. xii. 8; 2. Cor. ix, Heb. xiii. 16.

BRIEFLY PUT:—The object of labour is to be able to give, Eph. iv. 28; God will take the will for the deed, but never the deed for the will, 2. Cor. viii. 12. As stewards of God's bounty are we faithful? 1. Cor. iv. 2. If God proportioned our incomes to our gifts would they grow or decrease? 1. Cor. xvi. 2.

The Christian Endeavour Society in Mr. Ishii's orphanage at Okayama has sent a contribution to the Hampton Institute in Virginia.

INTERNATIONAL SCHEME OF SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS

ADOPTED BY THE SABBATH-SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

1894			FIRST QUARTER.			1894			
1894.		BIBLE LESSON		PROVE THAT		COMMIT TO MEMORY			
						PROOF.		GOLDEN TEXT.	CATECHISM.
Jan.	7	The First Adam.....	Gen. 1: 26-31; 2: 1-3	Man was created truly noble.....	Pa.	8: 5	Gen.	1: 27	Question, 8a
"	14	Adam's Sin and God's Grace.....	Gen. 3: 1-15	Our hearts are deceitful.....	Jer.	17: 9	1 Cor.	15: 22	8b, 8c
"	21	Cain and Abel.....	Gen. 4: 3-13	God accepts only heart worship.....	John	4: 24	Heb.	11: 4	8d
"	28	God's Covenant with Noah.....	Gen. 9: 1-17	God fulfils His promises.....	Heb.	10: 23	Gen.	9: 13	8e
Feb.	4	Beginning of the Hebrew Nation.....	Gen. 12: 1-9	Great benefits reward obedience.....	Isa.	1: 19	Gen.	12: 8	8f
"	11	God's Covenant with Abram.....	Gen. 15: 1-9	The pious family is blessed.....	Pro.	3: 33	Gen.	15: 6	8g
"	18	God's Judgment on Sodom.....	Gen. 18: 22-33	We should pray for all men.....	1 Tim.	2: 1	Gen.	18: 25	8h
"	25	Trial of Abraham's Faith.....	Gen. 22: 1-13	Faith subdues difficulties.....	Matt.	21: 21	Heb.	11: 17	9a
Mar.	4	Selling the Birthright.....	Gen. 25: 27-34	Godless people make bad bargains.....	Isa.	58: 3	Luke	21: 23	9b
"	11	Jacob at Bethel.....	Gen. 28: 10-22	Angels help the righteous.....	Heb.	1: 12	Gen.	28: 12	9c, 9d
"	18	A Blessing to all Nations.....	Gen. 28: 17-21	Good men are great blessings.....	Matt.	5: 16	Gen.	18: 18	9e
"	25	REVIEW	6.	God is a Father to his people.....	1 Cor.	13: 18	Matt.	22: 32	REVIEW.