Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from Peloubet's Select Notes.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson 1. March 11. Gen. 28:10-22.

JACOB AT BETHEL.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee."—Gen. 28:15.

I. THE FLIGHT FROM HOME.—V. 10. 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.

Esau naturally was very angry. He might have given up the birthright freely, but it made him indignant to be cheated out of it. He saw one easy course to obtain it. With his physical strength he could kill his brother Jacob, and the birthright would be his. To escape this danger Rebekah planned to have Jacob go away for a time, ostensibly to seek a wife among his kindred on the Euphrates.

10. "And Jacob went out from Beersheba," his father's home. Without a servant to attend him, or a beast to carry him, or any other accommodation, except, as he afterward informs us (Gen. 32: 10), "a staff" to walk with, he pursues his solitary way. "And went toward Haran." In Padan-Aram, Mesopotamia, the place where Abraham settled for a time, before he came to Canaan, and where his brother Nahor remained. Here lived Jacob's uncle, the brother of Rebekah. The distance was about 450 miles. It was a long, dreary, dangerous journey.

II. 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). "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 accommodate an army of Jacobs. It was no hardship for Jacob to take a stone for a pillow; the Syrians and Palestinians do it every night.

III. THE HEAVENLY VISION. V. 12. Some chapters beyond the one where this incident is recorded is a single verse (35: 3) which throws no little light upon this night of the vision. The account here reads as if God, unasked, revealed Himself to Jacob in this wonderful way, and we could but guess at the feelings of Jacob on this eventful occasion. But twenty-eight years afterwards he proposes to his family to go to Bethel, and build an altar to God, "who answered me in the day of my distress." This vision was not a gift unsought, but in answer to earnest prayer, an answer to a soul which looked to the God of his fathers in time of distress.

12. "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 seemly footing for ascending and descending angels. Dr. Robinson, in his volume "Bethel and Penuel," says that he and some friends lay down near this spot and saw down the beautiful valley a "vision that must have been the framework of the gorgeous spectacle the patriarch saw. The appearance was precisely that of a gigantic ladder, one end close to us, distinct at our feet, the other almost touching the sky. We laid our heads back upon the pillows, and in an instant the illusion was perfect." "The angels of God ascending and descending." God would teach him the connecting and living intercourse between heaven and earth. "Jacob had thought himself alone; the vision peoples the wilderness. He had felt himself defenceless; the vision musters armies for his safety. He had been groveling on earth, with no thoughts beyond its fleeting goods; the vision lifts his eyes from the low level on which they had been gazing. He had been conscious of but little connection with heaven; the vision shows him a path from his very side right into its depths."

THE STAIRWAY A TYPE OF CHRIST. (1) In His own person Christ bridges over the chasm between heaven and earth, God and man. He is both God and man. (2) Christ is the means of communication between heaven and earth. Through Him came God's love, the revelation of God's character, the influences of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of Divine truths, the reality of immortal life, the assurance of forgiveness. Through Him we have access to God, our prayers and praises rise, our love grows strong, we have ideals and aspirations, we become in character and life nearer to God, we are made the children and heirs of God. Every upward step in life is through Christ as the way.

IV. THE DIVINE PROMISES.—Vs. 13, 15. 13. "And behold the Lord stood above it," governing and controlling all, the centre and object of all. Or as in margin of R. V., "stood beside him, near, as a friend. "I am the Lord God of Abraham." The God who had made a covenant with Abram and his seed. "To thee will I give it." The promises should be fulfilled through him. Of all the decendants of Abraham, Jacob was selected as the one in whose line the covenant blessings should flow.

14. AND THY SEED SHALL BE AS THE DUST, etc. This is a repetition of the promise made 130 years before to Abraham. (See Less. VI. and VIII.) Jacob's birthright is confirmed here to him. This was the assurance of forgiveness for the past, and a motive for Jacob to change and renew his life.

15. BEHOLD I AM WITH THEE, AND WILL KEEP THEE, etc. I will direct, help, and support thee in a peculiar manner. The Lord assures him that, however he might be an alien from his father's house, he should not be cast away from "his" presence, and that he would be his guide and guardian "wherever" he should go.

THE POWER OF THE PROMISES. Promises of success, of God's presence and protection, of better and happier times, have been the inspiration and power of God's people in all ages, and a strong motive for entering upon the service of God. The church has ever had before it the millennial days, and the heavenly Jerusalem. Christ himself saw the joy that was set before him. In every life, in every age, in every work, promise and hope have been inspiration, encouragement, and power.

V. THE COVENANT OF CONSECRATION.—Vs. 16-22. 16. "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. We see the clouds of sorrow, and do not realize how near the sun is, shining on the other side.

17. AND HE WAS AFRAID. The more clearly we see God, the more we realize our own weakness and helplessness, unworthiness and sin. "How dreadful is this place! It seems strange, at first thought, that the house of God should be dreadful, and the gate of heaven should fill him with a solemn fear. And yet it is just these places where the great decisions of life are made, where the gate of heaven is revealed, and the choice is made to enter or refuse, that are filled with solemnity and awe. Life and death are in the balance. Two eternities are there. "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.

18. "Took the stone . . . and set it up for a pillar." To mark the spot where so important a communication had been made to him. But besides its use as a memorial, it would enable him to identify the place upon his return, and pay there his vows. "And poured oil upon the top of it." Because oil was the symbol of the dedication of a thing to holy uses. "Herein is the value of forms; impressions, feelings, will pass away unless we have some memorial. If we were merely spiritual beings, then we might do without forms; but we are still mixed up with matter, and unless we have a form, the spirit will die.

19. "And he called the name of that place Bethel." That is, house of God.

20. "And Jacob vowed a vow." As God had been very good to him, and made him great and precious promises, Jacob now does all he can in return. He gives himself to God. "Saying, if God will be with me." This is not making any condition with God, for this is only a recital of the promise, and is more properly rendered, since—inasmuch as. It expresses no doubt or contingency. It is Jacob's accepting the terms of the covenant God confirmed to him in vs. 13-15. Jacob was no "conditional disciple." "Bread . . . raiment." Note how moderate are Jacob's expectations and desires. Not wealth, luxury, rank, but enough for his daily needs.

21. "Then shall the Lord (Jehovah, the covenant God) be my God." That is, I will utterly renounce and forsake all the idolatries and superstitions of the surrounding heathen; I will acknowledge, worship, and cleave to Jehovah alone, having no other God before Him.

22. "And this stone . . . shall be God's house." He would dedicate this place to God's worship, and afterwards erect there an altar for the celebration of divine worship, a resolution which was subsequently carried out (see chap. 35: 1, 15). "And . . . I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." This was one share of all his earnings, given to God in acknowledgment of his allegiance, just as men pay taxes to the government to which they belong.

Here is the proof of Jacob's conversion. He gave himself to God. He had and loved a place of worship. He consecrated his property. He was yet a very imperfect man, but he began a new life from this time, and went on in a zig-zag course toward santicification.

—O Sorrower, push not away the words of sympathy! We from whose inner being they come, know how weak they are. They are powerless to remove thy grief. They may bring thee comfort in thy grief. They may infuse strength and courage. They cannot change the outward event, but they can change the inner soul. They can lift thee above the event. So the angel that God sent to the disheartened and death-inviting Elijah, lifted him. So the angel from heaven that appeared unto Jesus in Gethsemane strengthened Him. But, dear Sorrower, *faith* is the victory that overcometh the world. It lives by the promise of a glorious redemption. It sees the brightness and toarlessness of the life to come. Why do you not strengthen yourself to believe that there there are two doors to the tomb? Not only a door in, but a door out. And why do you lack the companionship of our Lord Jesus Christ in sorrow? Why do you not lay sorrow's burden on the gracious One who stands ready bear it with you and for you? If life is so little worth living, as you believe since your bereavement, why not devote it all and totally to Him?—THEODORE E. SCHMAUK, in "Heart-Broken."

A Pointer for You.

The following letter from L. E. Rolston, of St. John, to the Hawker Medicine Co., explains itself: "A short time ago I was suffering from a very severe cold, hoarseness and cough. I got a bottle of Hawker's Balsam of Tolu and Wild Cherry and it cured me in two days. I feel that every person should know of the remarkable virtues of this remedy." "Friends, have you tried the remedy referred to for that cold or nasty cough?"

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B. Y. P. U.

OUR OBJECT.

The unification of Baptist young people; their increased spirituality; their stimulation in Christian service; their edification in scriptural knowledge; their instruction in Baptist history and doctrine; their enlistment in missionary activity, through existing denominational institutions.

OUR FELLOWSHIP.

All Young People's Societies of whatsoever name in Baptist churches, and Baptist churches having no organizations are entitled to representation. We depend for our unity not upon any young people's name or method. Our common bond is in the New Testament, in the full affirmation of whose teachings

WE ARE ONE PEOPLE WITH ONE MISSION.

Correspondents to this department should address their communications to REV. J. J. BAKER, St. John, N. B.

For the Week Beginning March 4th.

TOPIC: "Not far from the kingdom." Mark 12: 34.

(An outline from C. J. Pope in the *Baptist Union*.)

Did this scribe ever become a Christian? No one has ever been able to answer. We are permitted to make two suppositions, and to draw, in each case, lessons.

I. Let us suppose that he did not, how came he, when he was so near, to fail of entering in?

a. He did not act as well as he knew how to act.

b. He was unwilling to break with his old life.

c. Although he was near, his failure was as fatal as though he had been afar off.

II. Let us suppose that the scribe became a Christian. If he did, how was it?

a. Primarily, he was candid.

b. He used the light he had.

c. He accepted of Christ as his Saviour.

Some may be as near the kingdom as was this scribe. They may be in Christian homes, in Sabbath-schools, in this meeting. The kingdom of heaven has come nigh to them. May all such be led by the Spirit to take this opportunity to pass in!

President Chapman had a great meeting in the First Church, Sacramento, California, where Dr. Hopper was pastor while in the far west. Rev. Jno. Downie, of Petabuma, a youth of 86 years, read a paper on "what we young folks think of ourselves." The racy introduction is so good we must pass it on: "He said that as a young man, with raven locks shimmering in the daylight and with a face innocent of the razor, he wanted to inform the distinguished visitor from the East, in a modest sort of way, how the young people of this wild and woolly country regard themselves. Some, the speaker said, might dispute this youth, they must not judge by appearance, but get down to hardpan realities. He was a member of the Baptist Young People's Union and that was sufficient guarantee of his youth.

He belonged to a State that had the tallest trees, the highest hills, the richest valleys, the bluest skies, the brightest stars the smartest rogues, the finest cataracts and the champion prize fighter of the world.

The Young Peoples Society have their ideas, and they are not small. They say to the old people, "Stand back and see how we will acquit ourselves in fighting the devil and in conquering the nations for Christ. You can give us your admiration and praise, but none of your old wise saws. We know just what the world wants, and can supply it. You are behind the times; stand aside and give us room."

An old Scotch preacher used to pray Oh Lord give us a good conceit of ourselves. No one ever knew what he meant by it, but our young people have evidently prayed the same prayer, and the Lord has answered bountifully.

The B. Y. P. U. of the First Church, Halifax is in a fairly good condition, striving to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The pastor, Rev. A. C. Chute is with us heart and hand. Together we are praying, working for and expecting a gracious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. We are thankful that some drops have already fallen. "But for the *showers* we *plead*."

Halifax, Feb. 16, '94.

SARA NORTON, Sec.

The Young People's Union, of the North Baptist church, Halifax, held their second annual business meeting on Jan. 27th, and elected their officers for the next six months: President, P. R. Colpitt, re-elected; Vice-President, W. Freeman; Recording Secretary, Minnie Hubley; Treasurer, G. A. MacDonald. During the past year the church held a revival, and there were added to the membership of the Union 56 active (seventeen of whom had been associate) and four associate members; for this we are greatly encouraged to go forward in Christ's name and attempt greater things for Him in the future than we have in the past. The various committees have been to the front in their work for Christ. The Flowers and Visiting committee, with the aid of our sister, Mrs. March, have begun a splendid work among the poor of the North End, and since our sister has moved away we trust the work will still go on.

Our young brothers are doing something for the Master in distributing tracts and notices at the hotels and wharfs. A large number of the young people have taken up the three C. courses, and we hope that a still larger number will see their way clear to do so in the present year. The local union of Halifax and Dartmouth intend holding a social in the vestry of the North church on Friday, Feb. 23rd, and we hope in this way to become better acquainted with each other and thus keep on the cause of Christ.

ELSIE SMITH, Cor. Sec.

P. E. Island.

At the February Conference Meeting of the P. E. Island pastors and workers held at Tryon, some very wholesome resolutions were considered:

Resolved, That we recommend this conference to issue a call to our Island churches to send their delegates to next Association prepared to organize an Associational B. Y. P. Union.

Further Resolved, That we recommend and encourage the organization of Local Unions in all our churches. J. S. C.

CAVENDISH.—We are getting along nicely with our prayer-meetings, and pegging away at the lessons on the Dawn of Christianity. There is a good deal of work needed, but we find the work pleasant. We have received one active and two associate members lately. Quite a number of our active members are in other places—one in Chicago, two near Boston, Mass., one at Guelph, Ont., three at P. W. College, Charlottetown, and one teaching at West Devon, P. E. I." We miss them very much from our meetings. The stormy weather has interrupted our meetings, but as we meet from house to house and always get a warm welcome, it braces us up to brave a good deal. Our officers for the half year are: President, Bessie McNeil; Vice-Pres., Adelaide Clark; Sec'y, Maggie McNeill; Treas. Ethel Simpson; Cor. Sec'y, Nellie F. McNeill; Chairman Devot'l Com., Mrs. Spurr; Chairman Social Com., J. S. Clark.

Yours heartily,

JEREMIAH S. CLARK.

REMINISCENCE.

In compliance with the request of a number of my old pupils, who were not permitted to hear it read, I enclose the following for publication. It explains itself.

Philadelphia, Pa., May 28, '92.

MY DEAR MISS GRAVES,—

Your kind invitation to be with you at your approaching anniversary, or to send you something from my pen for that occasion, finds me in the midst of these most interesting and absorbing exercises of our Missionary Centennial Anniversary.

That "glance backward" did not come under my eye until on my way hither. And your letter, so soon following it, naturally leads me in complying with your request to indulge in reminiscences, personal and historical. I can but wish it had come earlier. In that case I might have had the inspiration of living faces, aiding facts and fancies. God so willing, may such an opportunity come sometime to me, that I may speak to the young women of to-day in our school. God grant that they may know their opportunity.

As I turn to loved pupils of '59 to '62 tenderest, sweetest emotions are stirred. Affection flies, "thought swift through years of memories, and crowds them in an hour." I cannot possibly do better than quote from that Backward Glance. "My thoughts will go back to our beginning—to that wonderful prayer-meeting—where one almost felt the wind of the Spirit fanning the face! Across the lapse of thirty-one years, I see it all again, each face and form embalmed in love and enthroned in perpetual youth." "Dear Girls," of my *Berwick School*—you *the twenty*, who, when our numbers had out-grown our space, said, "Go to Wolfville and we will stand by you." God bless those of you who still linger to work and pray for our Seminary. Truer hearts than yours never beat. You never failed me. You never gave me pain. Your younger "Sorores in Literis" owe you much. Our sky is brightening towards the West.

"The airs of Spring may never play,
Among the ripening corn,
Nor sweetness of the flowers of May,
Perfume the Autumn morn."

"Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look
Through fringed lids to heaven,
And the pale aster in the brook
Shall see its image given."

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
The south winds softly sigh,
And sweet calm days in golden haze
Melt down the amber sky."

"And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the zephyrs play,
And all the windows of our hearts
We open to the day."

I thank God for this anniversary of Acadia, and for all of progress towards *light* and *liberty* which it reveals. I have high hopes for our proposed Alumnæ association—albeit I see no place in its constitution for former teachers, though I should certainly wish to be counted a member.

I cannot close without a word of grateful recognition of the kindly assistance rendered me in my efforts at Wolfville by others than those of my entire school family. Prominent among them in my heart's best memories is J. W. Barss, Esq., the all time friend of our Acadian Institutions.

ALICE SHAW CHIPMAN.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN INDIA.

For Boys and Girls in Canada.

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS:

Under this broad tree, see this high stone pulpit! It is as high as that man's shoulders. It is built of cut stones, whose weather-beaten faces tell its age. Let us go up the steps, for there is no preacher on it now, nor congregation sitting on the grass. The desk, too, is gone, but arranged across the middle of the platform, nearly as far apart as the posts of your big gate, are two tall stone posts. At the top they curve toward each other and meet in an arch, like a colossal horse-shoe, lofty enough for a boy to gallop under it on horse-back, if he bowed his head. The posts are corniced. The arch is scalloped. The whole affair was once whitewashed, and was intended to be handsome—a festoon of adamant.

What a fine place in this grove for a S. S. picnic, and what a fine place in this arch to hang a swing? Here the scholars could sport in the cool of the day, with the green tree tops rustling above them, the home of the parrot and the dove. Sure enough! Here, high up on each post are iron rings, on purpose to tie up a swing.

There is a Telugu going by. Let us ask him what this is! "Excuse me sir: Will you kindly tell us for what purpose this platform and arch were erected?" "This is where they swing god, sir," he replies. "Swing god!!! *What do you mean?*" "I mean," says he, "the god named Padmanabhaswamy. Up on this hill over our heads, you see that white temple. That is where he lives. They bring him down to this platform and swing him." "You mean they bring the idol down," we replied. "Yes sir" he responded, "I mean the idol. That is our god. He is a great god. The people come from far to worship him." "Do they bring it down every day?" we asked. "No sir. They bring him down on feast days, or on other special occasions. The priests bring him down and the people follow in mighty procession. They escort him to this place with music and shouting and beating of drums. Then the priests put up a swing in the arch, tie him in it and swing him."

"Why do they swing him?"

"They swing him to please him. He is a great god, and we want to keep him good natured. If he should get angry at us, it is hard to tell what he would do. We must do everything we can to keep him in good humor. We worship him, so that he will not hurt us."

Could you imagine a greater change wrought upon the surface of the earth, than would be experienced, if the village of Padmanabham should some day be "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea?" The boys and girls worship this ugly idol, whose heart is all stone.

Yours truly,

LED. MORSE.

Bimlipatam, India, Dec. 30, '93.

S. P. Smith, of Towanda, Pa., whose constitution was completely broken down, is cured by Ayer's Sarsaparilla. He writes:

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