

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XX.

May 18, 1873.

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN.

Gen. xiv. 1-8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VERSES 4, 5.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Acts vii. 18; Psalms cv. 17-19.

With v. 1, read Matt. xxviii. 10, 16; with v. 2, 3, Matt. xiv. 26, 27; with v. 4, Isa. xl. 2; with v. 5, 2 Cor. i. 6, 7; with v. 5, Mic. vii. 19; with v. 6, 7, Gen. i. 20; and with v. 8; Matt. x. 23-31.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Evil can be overcome with good. (Rom. xii. 21.)

Let us carry on the history in our minds. The first supply of corn being exhausted, the brothers, with difficulty, and by the urgent plea of Judah, induced Jacob to let Benjamin go (ch. xlii. 2, 9, 11). Their father counsels a present, which is taken, and double money (v. xii), and gives them a parting blessing, though much despirited (v. 14).

Joseph, glad to see Benjamin, entertains them handsomely, releases Simeon, asks after their father, and surprises them by placing them according to age. It is of note that they sat (33), an Egyptian custom, instead of reclining, and that Herodotus mentions the custom of sending double portions to honoured guests.

Would they envy Benjamin, he asks, practically, as they did him? He put the affection of the brothers for Benjamin to a still severer test, by having his cup put in his sack (ch. xlii. 2). If they cared little for Benjamin, they would, of course, leave him in his hands. They appear well in this affair (v. 18 onward). No more eloquent speech than Judah's (v. 18-34). A model for simplicity, force, directness, pathos, but most of all, for the eloquence of *deed* in it, in offering to be taken for Benjamin. It had its effect. The evidence is complete that they do not feel to Benjamin as to him. Here our lesson begins, with

I. JOSEPH'S RESERVE TO THE EGYPTIANS.—I, he could not keep back the avowal of the true state of the case. His heart yearns over them. He is *convinced* of their good faith, is moved by Judah's unselfishness, longs to be reconciled to a word of reproach against Benjamin, as he heard, though he seemed to be the immediate cause of the trouble. He sends every stranger out from him. Why?

(a) The deepest feeling of this kind does not wish for witnesses.

(b) He has a certain dignity that he must preserve before the Egyptians.

(c) He does not wish to exhibit the bad deeds of his brothers to Egyptians who could not, without details, understand this strange interview. See John iv. 7, 8.

(d) The Egyptians could not comprehend his view of the famine, and his mission as he would have his brothers to understand it. He is, throughout all this, a most prudent, considerate ruler, an able administrator, far removed from the mere man of impulse; and there is no shame of his poor relatives; too great for that *meanness*, for he afterwards brings them to Pharaoh and introduces them.

II. HIS OUTBURST OF FEELING to his brothers. "He wept aloud." So do all eastern persons. (See ch. xxvii. 31; 1, 10, 11). Abruptly, and in the rapid words of strong feeling he tells the story—"I am Joseph!" How they must have felt! Am amazement, then terror, yet only momentary, for he instantly asks a re-answering question: "Doth my father yet live?" which plainly says, "I have all the old home feeling." Besides the risk of his life has just been spoken of (ch. xlii. 31). But it is hard to feel at ease; they do not dare to meet him with any endearment, till he says, "Come near to me, I pray you; for they were troubled" (v. 3). They might have been expected to implore him, but he beseeches them. The "fear that hath torment" (1 John iv. 17, 18) is on them. He would give them confidence and set them at ease. He has forgiven their sins; he would have them forget it. So generous is love. To this magnanimity to man he is helped by

III. HIS FIFTY TOWARD GOD.—He traces the result to God's wise providence, that is, "seeing before" (v. 5). He overlooks the evils he had endured, and dwells on the kind purpose of God to "preserve life." He discerns God's will controlling and using human will even when it errs. So should we (Acts ii. 23, 24).

He dwells on the gracious aspect of this providence to them (v. 7), "to preserve you a posterity in the earth." Thus the Egyptians could not comprehend. He does not now enter into particulars of his own history which they could only in part understand. There will be time enough for that.

He shows great delicacy of feeling—not a word of the dreams, or a sign of vulgar triumph over them—or the least conscious superiority to them.

He owns God's hand in all his advancement. Already there has been a hint of his deep religious feeling (ch. xli. 18), "for I fear God." His steward had caught his spirit, "like master like man," as we see in ch. xlii. 28, how he avows that God advanced him (v. 8), using a phrase which eastern rulers often apply to their confidential advisers and trusted friends, "father" to Pharaoh (see John xvii. 16). He as little takes credit to himself, as he lays blame upon them.

He believes God's word as to the future, v. 6. "Five years" have yet to be endured without ploughing, for which "earing" is the old word, (like the Latin *arare*), or harvest. This points to his plan of bringing them all into Egypt.

There are clear illustrations in this history of (1) truth and of (2) duty.

(1) Truth. (a) The brothers made to remember their sin; fear its consequences; conscience awakened; alarm raised. So have sinners to remember, fear and feel. How could they be at peace with God, and indifferent as to their sin against Him?

(b) It was after this that faith and friendship became possible. He sees that they are concerned for their sin against him, and will not repent it with Benjamin. They see that he freely forgives them. The reconciliation then takes place. How could impatient men have peace with God?

(c) Christ's way with men is seen here, not in one person (no one person can typify him) but in several. Judah shows him as a surety, standing for others. Joseph shows him fully forgiving, praying for murderers, and his exaltation after wicked men had slain him, God's way of blessing men. Evil can be turned away and turned to good in God's grace (Isa. i. 18).

(2) Duty is here illustrated. Love does not put away prudence. High rank does not kill love. Humble friends are not forgotten. Vengeance is not thought of. Evil is overcome with good. Joseph, is a model of modesty and humanity. He is a fond brother. Fidelity to pledges is good. The strong point with all the brothers, and in which they appear best, is when they agree that Benjamin must on no account be given up. Boys! be strong, true, manly, courageous, and remember the highest courage comes through fearing God.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I am Joseph." The natural voice, the native tongue, for he now spoke not by an interpreter, the long remembered features, would all at once, says Dr. Murphy, strike the apprehensions of the brothers. The remembrance of their crime, the absolute power of Joseph, and the justice of revenge would rush upon their minds. No wonder they were silent and troubled at his presence.

"In Egypt, an inferior kisses the hand of a superior. Friends saluting each other join the right hand, then each kisses his own hand, and puts it to his lips and forehead, or breast. After a long absence they embrace each other, kissing first on the right side of the face or neck, and then on the left, or on both sides of the beard. The kissing of the beard after long absence is still observed.

"Earing" is an old English word, which means plowing the land. Shakespeare says, "Let them go to ear the land." Jamieson supposes from this expression that the famine was caused by an extraordinary drought, which prevented the annual overflow of the Nile.

"BOYS WILL BE BOYS."

Never lose heart or stop praying because your boys are a little wild. While you sadly call to mind the things they have forgotten, you are ignorant of the things they remember. It is the fashion for boys to appear indifferent to the counsels of parents. They have an idea that it is rather the manly and handsome thing to take good advice in a dogged sort of way, just as they take medicine, and a very brave thing to dare your threat. All this is written in the code of boyhood. We can't quite say with Emerson, that it is the bad boy that makes the good man; and yet we have a great deal of sympathy with that overflowing spirit of youth which is sometimes a little reckless, and which frequently leads into mischief. Just sit down, if you have such a son, and recall your own early days. It may be difficult for you, just now, when you are in middle life, to see the fun which the boy finds in what appears to you to be utterly foolish, or perhaps wantonly evil; but if you will turn to the early chapters of your own biography, you will find yourself stopping up the spouts of the old country house just to see the rain pour over like a waterfall, and you will recall the fun of the old gentleman's embarrassment, as he rushed out into the rain, bareheaded, to find the cause of the trouble, and thereby got an attack of the rheumatism which laid him up for a couple of weeks. Well, your boy is going through the same experience, and by-and-by he will regard it, as you do now, as an unutterably foolish thing, and wonder where in the world the fun was. The truth is that these pranks are as necessary to boyhood as the measles. They are the result of natural animal spirits, which can no more be repressed than can the waters that come bubbling up out of the sand. We remember that when we were very young a wild colt presented his heels to us in such a forcible manner that before our surprise had vanished we found ourselves in a little disengaged heap on the other side of a several fence. At the time we thought it an unwholesome thing to do, and felt exceedingly like pelted the creature with stones. But he came up to the fence with such a demure and abashed look, and put his head between the rails and snuffed at us in such a repentant mood, that we concluded it was part of the necessary experience of the animal, and cheerfully forgave him. Now boys are colts. They never think of consequences. They only have the fun of the thing in view.

Don't stop praying, and praying hopefully, for your children at such times. By keeping close to the boy's heart, and trying to appreciate his side of the matter as well as your own, you will keep control of him.—Working Church.

Nothing procures love like humility, nothing hate like pride. The proud man walks along daggors pointed against him, whereas the humble and affable have the people for their guard, in danger. To be humble to our superiors is duty, to our equals, courtesy; to our inferiors, generosity, and these, notwithstanding their lowliness, carry such a sway as to command men's hearts.—Owen Feltham.

If ever man on earth was in right earnest it was Christ. If ever man looked on life, and on the world, and on the sins and sorrows of men in their reality, and spoke as one that did, he did so. No one that heard him could ever feel that he was trifling with him, that he was mocking his misery, that he was playing with his disease. He spoke as one who felt himself in the presence of awful powers of death and woe, who knew all, and in the depths of his soul felt all. This the common people loved; this they welcomed as the thing they needed, the only thing that met their case. Therefore, they heard him gladly. Let his servants go and do likewise, and they will hear them gladly, too.—North British Review.

Our Young Folks.

TRIFLES

By REV. S. D. HILLMAN.

The gentlest breeze
That in his bosom,
The placid waters will quiver,
The smallest brook
From the Syrian coast,
Will sing the broadest river
A single word
The heart of truth stirred,
And wakened feelings of pleasure,
While words unkind
Have brought to the mind
Sorrow and pain, without measure
The they need
May supply a need,
If cared for and duly protected
But if a worm
Destroys the germ,
No harvest need or be expected
A drop of dew
Will brighten the hue
Of the faded flower so tender
And one warm ray
From the orb of day,
Will add to its look of splendor

"A friend in need
Is a friend indeed,"
And who friendship's ties would sever?
But one rash act
Has sundered in fact,
Affection's fond ties for ever.
That which is small
Will often be all
Be said to have value and beauty
Where'er we turn
What lessons we learn
Pertaining to life and duty!

DO IT NOW.

Don't live a single hour of your life without doing exactly what is to be done in it, and doing straight through it from beginnng to end. Work, play, study—what ever it is—take hold at once and finish it up squarely and clearly, then to the next thing, without letting any moments drop out between. It is wonderful to see how many hours these prompt people contrive to make of a day; it is as if they picked up the moments that the dawdlers lost. And if over you find yourself where you have so many things pressing upon you that you hardly know how to begin, let me tell you a secret. Take a hold of the very first one that comes to hand, and you will find the rest all fall into file, and follow after like a company of well-drilled soldiers; and though work may be hard to meet when it charges in a squad, it is easily vanquished if you can bring it into line. You may have often seen the anecdote of the man who was asked how he had accomplished so much in his life. "My father taught me," was the reply, "when I had anything to do, to go and do it." There is the secret—the magic word now.—Selected.

THE BOOK OF THANKS.

"I feel so vexed and out of temper with Ben," said Mark, "that I really must—"
"Do something in revenge?" inquired his cousin, Cecilia.
"No; look over my Book of Thanks."
"What's that?" said Cecilia, as she saw him turning over the leaves of a copy-book nearly full of writing, in a round-text hand.
"Here it is," said Mark, then read aloud:—"March 8. Ben lent me his hat. Here again: 'January 1. When I lost my shilling Ben made it up to me kindly.' Well," observed the boy, turning down the leaf, "Ben is a good boy, after all."
"What do you note down in that book?" said Cecilia, looking over his shoulder with some curiosity.
"All the kindnesses that are ever shown me; you would wonder how many they are. I find a great deal of good from marking them down. I do not forget them, as I might do if I only trusted to my memory; so I hope that I am not ungrateful; and when I am cross or out of temper, I almost always feel good-humored again if I only look over my book."—New Jerusalem Messenger.

THE SPIDER'S BRIDGE.

One chilly day I was left at home alone, and after I was tired reading Robinson Crusoe, I caught a spider and brought him into the house to play with. Funny kind of playmate, wasn't it? Well, I took a wash-basin and fastened up a stick in it like a liberty-pole or a vessel's mast, and then poured in water enough to turn the mast into an island for my spider, which I named Crusoe, and put on the mast. As soon as he was fairly cast away, he anxiously commenced running round to find the main land. He d scamper down the mast to the water, stuck out a foot, got it wet, shake it, run round the stick and try the other side, and then run back up to the top again. Pretty soon it became a serious matter with Mr. Robinson, and he sat down to think it over. As in a moment he acted as if he wanted to shout for a boat, and was afraid he was going to be hungry, I put molasses on the stick. A fly came, but Crusoe was not hungry for flies just then. He was home sick for his web in the corner of the woodshed. He went slowly down the pole to the water, and touched it all around, shaking his feet like a pussy when she wets her stockings in the grass, and suddenly a thought appeared to strike him. Up he went like a rocket to the top and commenced playing circus. He held one foot in the air, then another, and turned round two or three times. He got excited and nearly stood on his head, before I found out what he knew, and that was this, that the draught of air made by the fire would carry a fine ashore on which he could escape from his desert island. He pushed out a web that went floating in the air, until it caught on the table. Then he hauled on the rope until it was tight, struck it several times to see if it was strong enough to hold him, and walked ashore. I thought he had earned his liberty, so I put him back in his woodshed again.—Heart and Home.

WHEN IS THE MINISTER'S SALARY DUE.

In an urgent call for funds to aid the Home Mission Board in the U. S. Presbyterian Record of a late date are some excellent statements in the following language: "Besides, Winter is at hand. Winter, without means in the missionary's hands to provide against its inclemencies, for his family and himself, is Winter indeed. What is needed is not the box of clothing only, but their money due when their work is done, at the end of each quarter. Prompt payment by the Board is the great antidote of Winter and want. The snows have already fallen in Montana, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming; and the missionaries are calling for over due money to prepare for still heavier storms."

The fact that any ministers should not be paid promptly "when their work is done" is deplorable indeed. And especially is it painful when we remember that multitudes of worthy, talented and educated ministers, when they get the "money due," receive less than ordinary workmen for unskilled labor. There can be no doubt that hundreds of able preachers receive far less than a fair and legal interest on their education alone, and some not more than the value of the interest, duly compounded, upon the cost of their libraries only. Surely they should receive the "money due;" but when?

Says the writer we have quoted, "when their work is done, at the end of each quarter." Now, I am free to say, as the pastor of a church which pays the salary quarterly in advance, that the end of the quarter is not the time when salary is properly due. It is not the true plan to compel ministers to support themselves for three months before the church begins to support the Gospel. It is setting the mark too low. It is a moral weakness to tell the churches that if they support the ministry by paying when the work is "done," they have fulfilled their whole duty.

The truth is, that in the starvation and robbery of ministers in this country, our Lord Jesus Christ has been deeply wounded, as the day of judgment will declare with an emphasis that will be startling. What seems to be needed is to educate the public conscience about this matter, to set the standard where it belongs. When the people are reminded of their duty, let it be their whole duty, and not such a part of it which, if it is done, will still expose them to shame in the great day of reckoning.

It is not long since a gentleman was complaining of his pastor. He had lost his influence by incurring debts. How, let us inquire, could he avoid incurring debts, if his salary was not paid in advance? Could he and his family subsist for three months on air and water and snow?

The Sustentation Committee are doing a noble and encouraging work. Other signs of progress appear here and there. Let this be the time to inculcate vigorously an improved code of morals, with regard to the treatment of the uncomplaining, self-denying men who serve Christ in the ministry. At best they will, many of them, contribute to their own support about as much as all other persons will give in the aggregate. Preaching the Gospel is a work so delightful, that for the privilege to say nothing of the minor constraining and imperatve call—most ministers are willing to sacrifice life, labor, patrimony and all earthly prospects. And they count it a small thing to bring from all available sources as much as the sum total they receive from the churches.

But what shall we say of the balance of the money pledged? When is it due? Let the conscience of the churches be taught what things are free from robbery and cruelty, pure and of good report.

GOD'S STEWARDS.

The things that we have, whose are they? House, food, raiment, ability, eloquence, power to exhort, persuasion, fame—whose are they? Are they ours? Men say, yes. They are proud of their ability, and boast of their possessions. 't to know that we have nothing makes us humble. Everything is God's. There is not a thing that belongs to you. God entrusts them to you, to use for him. Shall we steal them for our own use, as this unjust steward? If we do, before God we are unrighteous and unfaithful. God knows all. Why is it that some who were at first warm hearted and unceasing in preaching now have no heart, no earnestness? There is no foundation of living water in the earth. Only God has it. Why is it you go for joy to the world and worldly things? They cannot satisfy. If you go on and try it the devil will tempt and deceive you more and more. You may feel a kind of peace at times; but it will be like that of Saul after God's Spirit had left him. While David played, he had peace, but as soon as David stopped, his peace was gone. Finally, he went and sought the dead Samuel. Why? I have thought much about this for two or three years past. I think that while Samuel was living, Saul had always felt, when trouble came, I can go to him, and tell him, and he will pray with me, and help me, because the Holy Spirit is with him. Now that God's Spirit had left Saul, there was no true, permanent peace for him. So, if you go away from the duty to which God calls you, and pursue plans of your own, though I cannot tell what business you will go into, I can give you the general tenor of your history. It will be trouble! trouble! trouble! and, like Saul, you will only go on a little while before you come to destruction.—Rev. Hu Yong Mi of China.

Does not God hate sin more to-day than ever? We know He does. Then how can we see Him until purged from sin? Christ will make us clean indeed if we bond our wills and accept his outstretched arms.

If a man can grasp the thoughts that immorality ever carries with it, his own will tend toward the duties devolved on him while in the flesh.

Grace cannot be severed from its fruits. If God gives you St. Paul's faith, you will soon have St. James' work.—Topaldy.

Scientific and Useful.

INFLAMMABLE DRESSES.

Multitudes of intelligent admirers sympathized with the great poet Longfellow in the crowning sorrow of his life, when his accomplished wife was burned to death by her dress taking fire in the act of her sewing a letter with wax, a part of the flaming material having fallen on the gauzy fabric. The husband was in an adjoining room; at hearing her shrieks he was instantly by her side, but it was too late, she breathed the flame into her lungs, and all was over. If she had instantly thrown herself on the floor, and the husband, on his reaching the spot, had thrown a carpet or blanket, or even his coat, over her, she could not have been fatally burned.

The whole subject could be indelibly impressed on the minds of a family of children in ten minutes thus: Cicthe a doll with the finest muslin or paper, hold it upright and set the dress on fire; in an instant almost the head will be enveloped in flame. Cloth it again, set it on fire and instantly lay it on the side, and it will be soon that the face has not been touched, and instead of trying to put out the flame with the hands throw over it any cotton material, the flame will be increased; then throw over it a woolen material and it will be instantly put out.—Hall's Journal of Health.

AN OBJECT LESSON FOR CHILDREN.

Suppose you wanted to convince children of the injuriousness of eating too fast, and the advantages of cutting up food in very small pieces and chewing it deliberately. Have two glasses half filled with water, take a piece of ice and divide it equally, cut up one piece into pea-sized particles and put them in one glass, put the other piece in one lump into the other glass; note the time, stir each one with a spoon, thus showing how much longer it will require to melt the one lump than the many, dissolving, as they all do, from without, inwards. Then explain that the food in the stomach is dissolved from without, inwards; that the sooner it is dissolved the better, and the quicker it will be ready to be appropriated to the uses of the system; such an illustration could never be forgotten, and the whole philosophy of digestion would be thereafter fully comprehended.—Ib.

HOUSE FURNISHING AS AN ART.

We have plenty of elegant houses in our large cities and their surroundings, but few homes; plenty of furniture, but few comforts; plenty of food, but poor service; plenty of dress, but small comfort in wearing it. Why is all this? With all the means of elegant, and comfortable, and healthy living, why this universal unrest? We cannot answer our own questions in detail, but will add a few words on the uses of furniture in promoting the health and happiness of a family.

First: Let all furniture be selected, primarily for use, secondarily for decoration. To furnish your front hall so elegantly as to feel obliged to take your company in at the basement door, would be no greater folly than to furnish your parlor so expensively that you stand in mortal fear the moment you open its doors for use, or throw open its windows for light and air. The country "Aunt," whose "best room" was too nice for "ordinary company," made so many enemies by her individual distinctions, that her best room, small as it was, was ample to hold all the friends she had left by the end of the first year's experiment. A good rule in furniture, as in dress, is, never to buy an article which your means will not allow you to use on all proper occasions, and replace, when, by reason of use, its utility or beauty has been destroyed.

Second: Harmonize the different articles in each room, or suite of rooms, and balance the whole household around one central thought, so that you can exhibit your house as a whole, without shaming the meagreness of one department by the richness and display in another. Let comfort guide you in every selection—your own, rather than your neighbors'; your children's rather than your own, if either must yield—and you will have a home where good taste will never be offended, and where earthly happiness may reign undisturbed.—Cabinet Maker.

PACKING FOR MOVING.

Now the first principle in packing is to have the articles so firmly fixed that no amount of jostling or jarring can move them; and the manner in which the packing material is crowded in, so that it will keep the whole box firm, is of much more consequence than the quality or quantity of it. Glass and chin wear should be wrapped up in soft paper or newspapers; the bottom of each box thickly covered with hay. Then put in the dishes, the heaviest at the bottom, and so placed as not to touch each other, but not over half an inch apart. Wrap each plate and saucer in paper, and put in piles. Stuff in the hay with a small stick, between the dishes; make it as firm and solid as a rock. A bed quilt, or some blankets, can be tightly crowded in upon the top, after laying hay all over the dishes. Packed in this way, the most fragile articles can be carried thousands of miles without injury, and over the roughest wagon roads. I know of persons moving from New York to Colorado, who employed packers from the largest china store in the city to pack their highly prized china and glass, and when they arrived at their destination there was not one whole piece out of the various sets. Nothing was to be seen but brightly tinted pieces of glass and china. They did not understand their business.

Valuable furniture must be sewed up in matings, and entirely protected. Large bookshelves are better than square boxes for packing fragile articles, as they can be more easily handled, and if packed in as I have described, there can be no fear of their being injured.—S. C. J. in Country Gentleman.

In this world, full often, our joys are only the tender shadows which our sorrows cast.—Becker.

A spiritual life consists in Christ every-where active in the soul, as the blood is in the body.