



LESSON,—APRIL 7, 1907.

Jacob's Vision and God's Promise.

Gen. xxviii., 1-5, 10-22. Memory verses 13, 14.

Golden Text.

Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest. Gen. xxviii., 15.

Home Readings.

- Monday, April 1.—Gen. xxviii., 1-22. Tuesday, April 2.—Gen. xxix., 1-20. Wednesday, April 3.—Gen. xxxi., 1-16. Thursday, April 4.—Gen. xxxi., 17-35. Friday, April 5.—Gen. xxxi., 36-55. Saturday, April 6.—Isa. xli., 1-14. Sunday, April 7.—John i., 45-51.

For the Junior Classes.

To-day is the first Sunday in April, and spring is with us at last. Soon we shall be watching for the flowers to come out, for we all love the little flowers, they are so beautiful. Who can tell me what these are? (showing a handful of mixed seeds). Yes, of course you know in a general way that they are seeds, but now let us see if you can tell anything more about them. This, for instance, what will this grow into? (Holding up a bean). So you all know that, and some of these others are as easy to recognize as that (picking out various well-known forms, such as the nasturtium, pea, etc.), but among them may be some of the most destructive weeds that we have, and very few of you would be able to pick them out. Who, for an example, could tell what the seed of the burdock is like? You all know the little burr that holds the seeds and sticks so tightly on to our clothes, but the little seed does not show any signs of growing up into that great leaved plant that grows as tall as many a bush. But we do know that the seeds we set will grow up into the corresponding plant, and no one would expect to grow a pansy by planting any kind of seed at all. No matter how much you may hope your garden will turn out right, if you are not careful what seed you plant all the wishes and hopes in the world will not make any difference. Now the little acts and habits that we plant in our lives are like the seeds, and you cannot expect to plant a wrong habit that will grow up into a beautiful flower of character. If we plant a thorn seed we may be sure to suffer from the scratches by-and-bye. We have been studying lately about a man who, when he was a boy began to plant an ugly seed of selfishness, later we saw that it had blossomed into very nasty flowers, and in to-day's lesson we see how he had to suffer from its poisonous thorns.

While showing the children how Jacob had to bear the results of his own deceitful selfishness show how God was ready to lead and help him to better things if he was willing to follow His guidance.

For the Seniors.

It will be quite easy to take up the story of Jacob where the study left it three Sundays ago, as there is practically no time intervening. Verses 34, 35, of chapter 26, and the last verse of chapter 27, will explain the pretext on which Rebekah sought to send Jacob away. The brothers were now about fifty-seven years of age, and the two wives which Esau had taken from among the Hittites or descendants of Heth, had evidently proved by no means congenial. Rebekah, fearing for her favorite son's safety at the hands of the incensed brother, yet did not care to let Isaac know of the great bitterness engen-

dered by Jacob's act. She chose rather to offer a very real grievance, as her language shows it to have been, as sufficient reason for Jacob's leaving home. Yet he seems to have left in a hurry, and, although the acknowledged heir of a wealthy chieftain, to have gone without attendants, in sharp contrast to the retinue that accompanied Eliezer on his journey in search of a wife for Isaac. Although the chosen heir of God's promises, he was leaving home in fear of his life from a justly indignant brother, and God in no way palliates his offense or lightens his punishment. He must reap the harvest of his own sowing, but the Divine Presence is promised him, and with the assurance of God's care he vows he will recognize the power that leads him.

(Selections from Tarbell's 'Guide.')

The True Staircase by which Heavenly Messengers ascend and descend is the Son of Man. It is He who really bridges the interval between Heaven and earth, God and man. In His person these two are united. You can not tell whether Christ was more divine or human, more God or man—solidly based on earth, as this massive staircase, by His real humanity, by His thirty-three years engagement in all human functions and all experiences of this life, He is yet familiar with eternity, His name is 'He that came down from Heaven,' and if your eye follows step by step to the heights of His person, it rests at last on what you recognize as divine. His love it is that is wide enough to embrace God on the one hand, and the lowest sinner on the other. Truly He is the way, the staircase, leading from the lowest depths of earth to the highest height of Heaven.—Marcus Dods.

It is a grand doctrine, an inspiring doctrine, this of the divine omnipresence. But do we think of God as present with us personally in all the experiences of life? Such a thought of Him is infinitely more precious, infinitely more precious, than any theory of His omnipresence. You know that a true friendship must have in it a wide and generous sympathy with all the trouble that there is in the world. But when trouble comes to you, you want to be sure that your friend knows of it, and feels it, and is ready to help you bear it. A general thought of your friend's goodness is not enough. What you long for is a saving presence of a personal sympathy. It is not otherwise in our relation to God. What we want, to speak plainly, is to feel that God knows what happens to us, and is with us while it happens, and loves us steadily and tenderly through it all.—Henry van Dyke, in 'The Open Door.'

After sixty years of public life I hold more strongly than ever to this conviction, deepened and strengthened by long experience, of the reality, the nearness, and the personality of God.—Gladstone.

(From Peloubet's 'Notes.')

This is none other (or, 'than') the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. Not a literary sanctuary, but merely the spot where he had come nearest to God, and therefore a very precious place to him henceforth, as all such places will be to us. The gate of heaven is 'any place where God lets down the ladder. And how are you to determine where it may be, but by being ready for it always?'—Ruskin.

'Wherever upward, even the lowest round, Man by a hand's help lifts his feeblen brother,

There is the house of God and holy ground: The gate of heaven is love; there is none other.'

—Lucy Larcom.

And took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar. Thus observing an ancient and natural custom, other examples being the Mizpah pillar, and Joshua's pillar set up after the passing of the Jordan. 'The finger pointing heavenward is one of the earliest and simplest forms in religious symbolism; and it seems to be this form which lies equally at the base of the Egyptian obelisk, the Phoenician stèle, the Babylonian ziggurat, the primitive dolmen, and the tower or spire of a Christian cathedral.'—Rawlinson.

'On the drive from Hebron,' says Charles G.

Trumbull, 'I was led to inquire the meaning of the little single pillars of round stones (much like our cobblestones) found here and there upon the roadside. Sometimes five stones, but oftener four, were piled one on the other, each one being carefully placed with a view to proper balance. These proved to be "memorial stones." Greek pilgrims of Jerusalem and the holy places of Palestine, out of gratitude to God for a safe journey thus far on the way, erect a stone.'

Saying, if God will be with me, and will keep me. This is not fairly taken as a mercenary vow, an outcropping of Jacob's spirit of bargain-driving. 'His "if" is equivalent to "since"—"Since God is going to be with me, and to keep me, and give me all I need, and bring me back to my father's house in peace, I for my part pledge myself that he, and he alone, shall be my God; and further I pledge myself to render him that tenth of all my possessions, which is traditionally fixed as the right and proper proportion."—Rawlinson.

Bible References.

- Heb. i., 14; I. Tim. ii., 5; II. Cor. vi., 14; Heb. i., 1, 2; Acts xvii., 27, 28; John i., 51; Psa. iv., 8; Prov. xv., 3; John xiv., 6.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, April 7.—Topic—The consecration of one day in seven. Jer. xvii., 19-27. (Consecration meeting.)

Junior C. E. Topic.

TRUST.

Monday, April 1.—Trusting God, we can forget fear. Ps. xxvii., 1.

Tuesday, April 2.—Trusting God, we are strong. Ps. lxxiii., 25, 26.

Wednesday, April 3.—Trusting, we are guided aright. Ps. cxliii., 8-10.

Thursday, April 4.—Trust and praise.—Ps. xl., 1-4.

Friday, April 5.—Trust and work. I. Tim. iv., 8-10.

Saturday, April 6.—Trust in God's goodness. Nah. i., 7.

Sunday, April 7.—Topic—What is it to trust God? Prov. iii., 5, 6. (Consecration meeting.)

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