

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

LESSON FOR APRIL 13th, 1894.

Joseph sold into Egypt.—Gen. 37: 23-36. GOLDEN TEXT.—Ye thought evil against me but God meant it for good.—Gen. 50: 20.

INTRODUCTORY.

In this and succeeding lessons, is plainly to be seen the "Guiding Hand" in a series of remarkable special providences overruling the evil purposes and acts of evil men and making them the means of bringing about the very purpose they sought to thwart—the elevation of Joseph—as well as the more general purposes of God in reference to the chosen family and, through it, to the whole race.

NOTES.—They stripped him of his coat.—The very fact that they stripped him of his coat indicates that when they determined to kill him they also decided upon the plan by which to deceive his father.

And they cast him into a pit.—The people at this time and in this region were almost entirely dependent in summer upon the rain water they might catch in the winter, hence, numerous pits or cisterns were hewn in the solid rock, or built of stone and plastered, for that purpose.

And Judah said, What profit is it that we slay our brother?—At Reuben's suggestion they concluded to put him into a pit and let him perish rather than slay him, and now at Judah's suggestion they decided to sell him rather than to let him perish.

It is my son's coat.—These touching words of Jacob are thus rendered in the Cambridge Bible: "Tunic of my son! An evil beast hath eaten him! Torn, torn,—Joseph!"

Lessons.

1. "A good character will not save one from wrong and trouble; but sometimes even brings one into trouble and is the occasion of injustice. In every age some men have been called upon to suffer because they are the children of God."—Bp. Vincent.

2. "Let not the righteous be cast down because God does not come immediately to their relief; neither let the wicked be too sure in their wickedness because God does not immediately strike them down."—Pentecost.

3. Stripping one of his clothes or destroying his reputation does not rob him of his character or his superiority.

4. He who has not the moral courage to openly protest against wrong but compromises with wrong doers for the purpose of thwarting their wicked purposes, thus going half way, will eventually be involved in their evil deeds and forced to conceal them.

5. The purposes of God cannot be frustrated and he will even use the most wicked devices of wicked men to bring them to pass.

6. Sin is cumulative. "Crime begets crime." Envy leads to hatred, hatred to murder, murder to falsehood and unkindness to parents as in this case. What a fountain of iniquity is a bad heart!

7. The road to the throne or to heaven often lies through the pit and slavery, and humiliation comes before exaltation.

To compromise your conscience once is to give the devil a mortgage on your character.

Communities as well as men have a right to be judged by their best.—James Russell Lowell.

The best contribution that any man can make to a community is a high character.—Mark Hopkins.

When you have gained your consent to do an unjust act against a fellow-man, you have cut yourself off from the favor of God.

Apostasy generally begins at the closet door; secret prayer is first carelessly performed, then frequently omitted; after awhile wholly cast off; then, farewell God and Christ, and all religion.—Heros.

"Prevailing prayer" emphasizes persistence and humility. It is like being on a wreck with tide coming in, great danger ahead, but help in sight. At such a time we never rejoice in our own strength or ability.

"Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees." Do you wonder?—Sel.

Our churches are full of men and women who have been on a spiritual furlough for a long season. If interrogated as to their religious indifference and inactivity, they commence at once to tell a story of neglect, or slight, or something worse, that they have received at the hands of some member of the church; or possibly the minister has not recognized their peculiar gifts or abilities.

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