

## The Quiet Hour.

### Israel Oppressed in Egypt.

S. S. Lesson.—Nov. 10; Exodus 1: 1-14.

Golden Text.—Exod. 2: 24. God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant.

BY REV. J. MCD. DUNCAN, B. D.

Now these are the names of the children of Israel, v. 1. What a marvellous race the Jews have been! Their discipline under the Law of Moses produces in them a type of national character like no other in the world. Said Balaam (Num. 23: 9), "They shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Their characteristic feature, according to Goethe, is toughness. This strength of moral fibre, combined with the genius for religion, furnished a suitable soil for the growth of the great religious leaders of the world. To the Jewish nation we owe David and Isaiah, Paul and John. Greatest gift of all, from this nation Christ sprang. The influence of this wonderful people is still powerful in literature and politics and finance. The Christian Church will yet receive a great accession of strength from the ingathering of the Jews. "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11: 15) The Church and the world will be enriched by the fruitage of those ages of patient training under the care of that harsh "pedagogue" (the Law) which will bring them at last to Christ. (Gal. 3: 24) It will not be in vain for themselves or others that this people have "borne the yoke in their youth." (Lam. 3: 27).

Reuben, etc., vs. 2, 3, 4. These names are stained with blood, and darkened by crime. Around them clings scarcely one great and lovable memory. Yet theirs was a glorious heritage; and theirs a noble destiny. To what can we ascribe their high place but to the grace of God? Not even their descent from Israel could prevent their falling from their lofty privileges. For, when we turn to the Revelation (7: 5-8), we find that the tribe of Dan has been blotted out, while Manasseh is counted separately from Joseph to complete the twelve. Our salvation is not secured by our merely natural descent from Christian ancestors.

And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation, v. 6. The people of Israel had now no longer in the great prime minister, their kinsman, a prop to support them. Nor was there, now, any one whose eyes had actually rested on the hills and valleys of Canaan to which it had been promised that they should return. They were left without the encouraging presence of Joseph; they were deprived of the testimony of eye-witness to the beauty and fertility of the Promised Land. So Paul left the Philippians to "work out their salvation" in his "absence." (Phil. 2: 12.) Why have the people of God been robbed so frequently of all external helps to their faith, if not to drive them to more simple and direct reliance upon God, "which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?" (Phil. 2: 13.)

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, v. 7. "No book attaches more weight, than the Bible, to the truth, amply vindicated by modern science, that good breeding in the strictest sense of the term, is a powerful factor in the

lives of men and nations. To be well-born does not of necessity require aristocratic parentage, nor does such parentage involve it; but it implies a virtuous, temperate and pious stock. In extreme cases the doctrine of race is palpable; for who can doubt that the sins of dissolute parents are visited upon their puny and short-lived children, and that the posterity of the just inherit not only honor and a welcome in the world, 'an open door,' but also immunity from many a physical blemish and many a perilous craving? If the Hebrew race, after eighteen centuries of calamity, retains an unrivaled vigor and tenacity, be it remembered how its iron sinew has been twisted, from what a sire it sprang, through what ages of more than 'natural selection' the dross was thoroughly purged out, and . . . a chosen remnant left. Already in Egypt, in the vigorous multiplication of the race, was visible the germ of that amazing vitality which makes it, even in its overthrow, so powerful an element in the best modern thought and action." (Chadwick.)

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph, v. 8. Long before this Joseph had hoped for deliverance through the good offices of Pharaoh's butler, whose dream he had interpreted in the prison (Gen. 40: 15). But this hope was disappointed and Joseph learned to depend on God and not on powerful earthly friends. Now Israel was to be taught the same great lesson. It was not in the sunshine of Egyptian royalty that they were to find safety and peace, but in the light of the Divine countenance.

All their service . . . was with rigour, v. 14. In their prosperity they had forgotten God, and when men forget God, sooner or later they must suffer. This is an unfailling law, to which we do well to take heed. It may not be to-day or to-morrow, for God is never in a hurry, but it will be sometime, and common prudence says beware! avoid entering on a road which in the end leads to disaster. This is the dark side of the woe that follows transgression, as one in the sunlight is followed by his shadow. But there is a bright side too; for God is love as well as law. The punishment of sin may lead to its abandonment. So God means it to lead. And happy are those to whom suffering on account of their sins come, as it came to Israel in Egypt, as the open door to the way that leads back to God—a rough pathway, but the way to joy and peace.

### The Helping Hand.

BY HUGH MORTON

If you've helped a man in trouble, never blow:

It will pay you more than double,

Don't you know?

You have broken self's worst fetter

And have made the world your debtor,

And your chance of Heaven better,

Don't you know?

If a bit of luck has struck you, never blow:

Labor on while it is with you,

Don't you know?

You can make men's burdens lighter,

You can be of wrongs the righter,

And can make this old world brighter,

Don't you know?

Collingwood.

### The Mercy-Seat.

And then, lastly, the mercy-seat. Be familiar with it. If it be possible, have your morning watch. I do not say the hour, I do not say five minutes. There is no time in the economy of God, and almanacs and calendars are encumbrances in the life of communion. But see to it that every day before you look upon the face of man, you look into the face of your Lord. And not only at the beginning, but in the midst of the strife of the day, break away, if it be possible, to some secret place. End the day where you began it, at the mercy-seat. Find some attic, or lumber room, or any other place safe from intrusion, and make that your Bethel. At the mercy-seat, attempt to hide nothing. You cannot hide, don't imagine that you can. All the inner secrets are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom you have to do. Realize this, and speak to Him with contrition and repentance, of the things that you would hide from others.

At the mercy-seat, moreover, praise God. Your song may seem to be of no account in the mighty chorus that ever beats in tides of music upon the throne of the Eternal. But He hears it, and He wants to hear it. He waits for the sacrifices of praise, and small though your contribution may seem to be, without it to the infinite ear a tone is missing in the orchestra, and He will never be satisfied until the harmonies are complete. Don't disappoint God! Sing your song and offer your praise.

And yet again, at the mercy seat intercede. Tell your own need. There roll your burden upon the Lord. But particularly pray for others by name, often, earnestly. He knows, and yet He would have you tell Him. He has told us to bring with us words, and come before Him. He has ordained that blessing shall come in answer to intercession. It was at infinite cost that He provided the mercy-seat. Don't slight the love that prompted the provision, but make use of it in confession, in praise, and prayer.

Now, in conclusion. In few words have I written to you of the new life. How delightful it would be to have you all to one's self or to gather you in companies and talk to you, not for a bare half hour, but for days of these sacred things. That is denied to any human teacher. I pray you, remember that the Teacher of teachers is ever with you, and as I point you to Him, let my last words be those of earnest and urgent entreaty. You have given yourself to God. Now give God a chance in your life. Let there be no mental reserve in your submission and surrender. Ruthlessly sweep on one side all interests and persons that would come between you and your Lord. Live from the beginning a life of passionate devotion. The one condition the Master loathes is that of lukewarmness. Never mind if men criticise and misunderstand. If He shall understand and appreciate, that is all. Never forget your Lord's love, His nearness, His interest, His power. Do everything in His strength. Risk everything for His sake. So live your life as Christians, that if Christ should fail, you would forthwith be bankrupt. He will not fail, and you will never be bankrupt.—G. Campbell Morgan, in "All Things New."

The children of God are the temples of the Holy Ghost. The temple of the most holy living God should be free from sin and made glorious. He has said that if any man defile this temple that God will destroy him.