

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1881, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON V.

JULY 31.]

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS.

Exod. 7: 8-17.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 16, 17.

8. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

9. When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh and it shall become a serpent.

10. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11. Then Pharaoh called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

12. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

13. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them: as the Lord had said.

14. And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

15. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning: lo, he goeth out unto the water: and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against him come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shall thou take in thine hand.

16. And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

17. Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord; behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

GOLDEN TEXT.—They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.—PSA. 105: 27.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The weakness of God is stronger than men.

INTRODUCTORY.—After Moses' and Aaron's first interview with Pharaoh, the Israelites were oppressed even more cruelly than before. Moses expostulates impetuously with God, who renews his promise of deliverance, and meeting his statement that the people were now in a worse plight than they were before, &c., reminds him of his name, "Jehovah," the "I am what I am" which his forefathers had not known. He sends Moses, and Aaron as his prophet, to Pharaoh, to demand the liberation of Israel, promising to enforce it by judgments.

NOTES.—WISSE MEN, "those who know things," i. e., curious, hidden arts.—SORCERERS, conjurers, especially those who pretend to charm and drive out noxious animals and reptiles by supernatural powers, and who sometimes have an influence over the brute species.—MAGICIANS, "interpreters" of secret things; here probably a general term for both "wise men" and "sorcerers." The skill of Egyptian jugglers in sleight-of-hand tricks was proverbial.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE RODS TURNED TO SERPENTS. (II.) THE RIVER TURNED TO BLOOD.

I. THE RODS TURNED TO SERPENTS.—(8-13.) SHEW A MIRACLE, "give," or do, a wonderful deed; FOR YOU, for yourselves, as a sign of their being commissioned by God; ROD, see 4: 1-14, probably given him by Moses, a long staff carried by shepherds; SERPENT, not same word as in 4: 3, but a more general name for any large reptile, often applied to the crocodile; SERVANTS, officers, courtiers, &c.; CALLED, &c., to show that his magicians could do the same, and that Aaron's power was not peculiar and divine; ENCHANTMENTS, a deceptive appearance, a trick; SWALLOWED, a proof that Moses' God and religion were superior to those of Egypt; HE HARDENED, better "Pharaoh's heart was hardened."

II. RIVER TURNED TO BLOOD.—(14-17.) GOETH UNTO THE WATER, probably to perform his morning devotions; AGAINST, until; LORD, Jehovah; HEAR, i. e., obey; IN THIS, by this, i. e., the miracle that follows; I WILL SMITE, i. e., Moses, the representative of God; TURNED TO BLOOD, the miracle consisted in its immediate change at the command of Moses, and so that the fish in the river died and became a nuisance in itself, vs. 20, 21.

LESSON VI.

AUG. 7.]

THE PASSOVER.

Exod. 12: 1-14.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 12, 13.

1. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

2. This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

3. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house;

4. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls: every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

5. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

7. And they shall take of the blood, and strike

it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread: and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

9. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire: his head with his legs and with the purtenance thereof.

10. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning: and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

11. And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.

12. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.

13. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.—1 Cor. 5: 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Christ our deliverer.

INTRODUCTORY.—Nine terrible plagues had up to this time come upon Egypt, as judgments of God, because Pharaoh and his people refused to obey God's command and allow the Israelites to go and serve the Lord. The tenth and most terrible of all had to be endured in the visitation of the destroying angel to cut down the firstborn of all the Egyptians, "the chief of all their strength." Then "Egypt was glad when they departed," Ps. 105: 38. In order that the angel might pass over the houses of the Israelites, God directs Moses to institute the feast mentioned in our lesson, and in whatever house that feast was being held it was to be indicated by the mark of the blood of the lamb on the lintel and posts of the outer door.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE TIME. (II.) THE RITE. (III.) ITS MEANING.

I. THE TIME.—(1-4.) THIS MONTH, called Abib, 13: 4, later called also Nisan, corresponding to our March or April; FIRST MONTH, not only in time, but in importance. Tisri, our September or October, had formerly been the first month of the year. It remained first of the secular, while Abib became first of the religious, year; CONGREGATION, assembly, literally "a gathering together"; TENTH DAY, i. e., the fourth before the Passover; ACCORDING, FATHERS, i. e., for each family.

II. THE RITE.—(5-10.) WITHOUT BLEMISH, perfect, Lev. 22: 20-24, comp. 1 Pet. 1: 19; MALE OF THE FIRST YEAR, "son of a year," not over a year old; as in place of the first-born male child of the family, and young, as representing the innocence of Christ; KEEP IT UP, i. e., protect it carefully; FOURTEENTH DAY, Christ was crucified on that day; KILL IT, all the families of the Israelites at the same time; IN THE EVENING, "between the evenings," i. e., between early afternoon and sunset; Christ died at 3 p. m.; THE BLOOD, regarded as the life, or seat of life; STRIKE IT, i. e., sprinkle, it was done with a branch of hyssop, or kind of marjoram having a thyme-like odor; IN THAT NIGHT, after sunset, therefore the 15th Abib; AND UNLEAVENED BREAD, "with unleavened cakes," comp. 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8, made of dough without leaven or ferment, and therefore more quickly prepared, Deut. 16: 3; Exod. 12: 39; BITTER HERBS, no particular kind is designated; RAW, or half cooked; SODDEN, the past participle of seethe, a mode of preparing meat for food, Gen. 25: 29; Lev. 6: 28; FIRE, was always used in sacrifice, signifying the divine presence; PURTENANCE, "intestines." "This entire consumption of the lamb constitutes one marked difference between the Passover and all other sacrifices." The blood alone was sprinkled—so with our Lord.

III. ITS MEANING.—(11-14.) LOINS GIRD, the long outer garment tucked up under the girdle; SHOES ON YOUR FEET, or sandals, ordinarily taken off while in the house, and at a meal; STAFF, &c., as if to set out on a journey, therefore also the girding of the loins, and wearing of sandals; LORD'S PASSOVER, explains the feast, it is God's; He mercifully passes over, or by the Israelites, sparing them in His flight, while as to the Egyptians He will PASS THROUGH, in judgment and with destruction; SMITE, strike dead; MAN AND BEAST, i. e., all living creatures; GODS, "chief ones," "great ones," both men and idols, the latter being worshipped in the form of almost every animal; TOKEN, mark, sign and pledge; MEMORIAL, commemorative of God's past, and a foreshadowing of His future mercy; FEAST, festival of joy and thanksgiving; ORDINANCE FOR EVER, perpetual law.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) Christ our Lamb has been slain for us.
- (2.) His blood when sprinkled on us secures freedom from death.
- (3.) We must partake of his nature and righteousness by faith.
- (4.) Accept of the means of salvation appointed.

LESSON VII

AUG. 14.]

THE RED SEA.

Exod. 14: 19-27.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 19-20.

19. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel: and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night.

21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22. And the children of Israel went into the

midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24. And it came to pass that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.

25. And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel: for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

26. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.—EXOD. 14: 15.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—God is known by the judgments he executes.

INTRODUCTORY.—At the urgent solicitation of the Egyptians, Ex. 12: 29-33, the Israelites leave Rameses, taking with them many valuable gifts of jewels, silver, gold and clothing from their previous oppressors. If the reader will look at the map, he will find the journey to the Red Sea indicated. The Lord himself led the way in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Ex. 13: 21, 22. Pharaoh, regretting his permission, pursues with a great army, Ex. 14: 7, and overtakes them as they are encamped on the shores of the sea. The Israelites are filled with terror, and forgetful of the hand which was leading them, they again reproach Moses, who replies, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." God saying to him the words in the Golden Text of our lesson.

NOTES.—THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD, manifestation of the presence of Jehovah, called also the angel, or messenger of God, cf. 3: 2; Ps. 104: 4; Josh. 5: 13-15. It was the Shekinah that afterward rested on the Tabernacle, 33: 9-14; 40: 34-38. By day the cloud was seen; by night the flaming fire.—CHARIOTS, 600 went in pursuit of Israel, 14: 7, each had two wheels and was drawn by two horses, and carrying two soldiers, the one to drive carrying a shield, the other to fight with spear and bow. For fuller description see SCHAFF'S Bible Dictionary.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—THE SEA (I.) CROSSED BY THE ISRAELITES. (II.) DESTROYS THE EGYPTIANS.

I. CROSSED BY THE ISRAELITES.—(19-22) ANGEL OF GOD, see Notes; WENT BEFORE, see Ex. 13: 21, 22; FACE, from the front or van to the rear, so that while it was a light to the Israelites it hid them from the Egyptians; STRETCHED OUT, etc., see verse 16, very early in the morning, or even before midnight; EAST WIND, God used natural means; GO BACK, i. e., recede; THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED, i. e., there was a separation between the waters of the sea south, and those north; A WALL, a protection on each side, so that they could not be attacked, see Nahum 3: 8.

II. DESTROYS THE EGYPTIANS.—(23-27) PURSUED, WENT IN AFTER THEM, thinking they too might cross before the waters would return; ALL PHARAOH'S HORSES, etc., see Notes, i. e., all that had come in pursuit, verse 7; MORNING WATCH, about 6 a. m.; LOOKED UNTO, not only beheld, but manifested himself in judgment, cf. Ps. 77: 16-20; THROUGH, by means of the pillar; TROUBLED, threw into confusion; TOOK OFF, WHEELS, in the heavy sand and mud into which they sank. For "took off" we may perhaps read "clogged." The Egyptians recognized the hand of Jehovah in it; WATERS MAY COME AGAIN, that the waters may flow back and be as before; TO HIS STRENGTH, its usual depth; MORNING APPEARED, when it became day; FLED AGAINST IT, or through the deepening tide; OVERTHREW, marg., "shook off," i. e., from their chariots, washing them off by the waves, overturning them and the whole host in confusion.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) The Lord is with those who trust him, "always, even unto the end of the world."
- (2.) All things "work together for good" to them that love God.
- (3.) Not human power and skill, but obedience to God gains the victory.
- (4.) God's presence is comfort and strength to the believer, and confusion and destruction to the unbeliever.
- (5.) How much better to have God as a friend than a foe.

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea
Jehovah has triumph'd—his people are free!
Sing for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave—
How vain was their boast, for the Lord hath but spoken
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumph'd, his people are free.

Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord!
His word was our arrow, his breath was our sword,
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those who sent forth in the hour of her pride!
For the Lord hath look'd out from his pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are dash'd in the tide.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumph'd, his people are free.
—THOMAS MOORE.

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