

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE BEGINNINGS OF A NATION.*

In view of Dominion Day, Monday, July 1, start with a conversation about the beginnings of the Dominion of Canada. Recall the union of the four provinces, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1867, the addition of Manitoba in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, and Prince Edward Island in 1873, and the erection of the latest provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta, in 1906. Mention also the great territories yet to become provinces.

The lessons for the quarter take us back to the beginnings of the Hebrew nation. The events may be grouped about three great names, namely, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.

I. Jacob—Lessons I. and II. Two questions may be raised: 1. How did Jacob become the head of his family and of the chosen race? 2. How did he obtain a character worthy of this position? Taking the first question, bring out God's selection ("The elder shall serve the younger", Gen. 25: 23), Jacob's hard bargain with Esau for the birth-right of the eldest son, and his winning of Isaac's blessing by the trick contrived by Rebekah. Show how God brought good out of all this evil doing. Turning to the second question, go over again Jacob's vision at Bethel, the starting-point for him on the upward road, and the night struggle at the brook Jabbok, where Jacob was stripped of his self-confidence and reliance on dishonest methods, to put his trust in God and look to Him for success and prosperity.

II. Joseph—Lessons III. to VI. What was the part taken by Joseph in the beginnings of his nation? Bring out, by questioning, that through him the family of Jacob were saved from starvation and were brought down to Egypt, to be trained and disciplined for freedom and a life in the Promised Land. Then run rapidly over the events recorded in the career of Joseph. First, there were his dreams, bringing to a white heat the hatred and jealousy of his brothers, so that at last they sold him to be taken as a slave to Egypt. Here his unjust imprisonment resulted in his forming the acquaintance of Pharaoh's two officers and his introduction to Pharaoh himself, and his interpretation of the king's dreams. At length we see Joseph exalted to his second place in the realm of Egypt. In due time his brothers are driven to Egypt to buy the grain, and their visits finally result in Joseph's being reconciled to them and in the bringing of Jacob, with all his family and their households and dependents, down to Egypt, to dwell there for several hundred years.

III. Moses—Lessons VII. to XI. These five lessons tell the thrilling tale of how Israel at long last actually became a free nation. Lesson VII. tells of the preparations of the people for freedom. Get the scholars to describe the cruel slavery and terrible sufferings that kindled in the Hebrews a very flame of desire for liberty. Lesson VIII. describes the preparation of Moses for his work as a deliverer. Run briefly over the story of his birth, his rescue as a baby from the Nile, his training at Pharaoh's court, his casting in his lot with his own people, his slaying of the Egyptian, his flight to Midian, and his residence there for forty years. In Lesson IX. we have the vision of the burning bush, and Moses' call of God to

go and bring His people out of bondage. Then follows the story of the ten plagues, closing with the destruction of the Egyptian firstborn and the eager urging of the Hebrews by Pharaoh and his people to leave Egypt. Lesson X. belongs to Israel's birthday—the Dominion Day of the Hebrews. The Israelites could never forget the happenings of that wonderful night when the destroying angel passed over their blood-sprinkled dwellings. Only less marvellous was the rescue that immediately followed of the fleeing nation from the pursuing army. (Lesson XI).

"When thou passest through the waters," says the Golden Text for the quarter, "I will be with thee." Not only in the waters of the Red Sea was God with His people; but all through the sufferings and trials that came upon Jacob and Joseph and Moses and upon all Israel, He was near to them as their Helper and Friend. And He is just as near now to all who trust Him. Sing, "He leadeth me," Hymn 297, Book of Praise.

THE HOUSE OF OBED EDMON.

The house of Obed Edom,
Where safe the ark abode,
What time were wars and fightings
On every mountain road,
What time was pitched the battle
In every valley fair,
The house of Obed Edom
Had peace beyond compare.
With famine on the border
And fury in the camp,
With the starving children huddled
In the black tent's shivering damp,
With the mothers crying sadly
And every man a prayer—
In the house of Obed Edom
Was neither want nor care.
The fields of Obed Edom,
No foe-man trod them down;
The towers of Obed Edom
Were like a fortified town;
And only grace and gladness
Came speeding on the road
To the house of Obed Edom,
Wherein the ark abode.
And far and near they told it,
The men who passed that way,
How fell Jehovah's blessing
On that home by night and day;
How the smallest to the greatest
Had joy and hope and love,
While the roof of Obed Edom
Was watched by God above.

The line of Obed Edom
Is on the earth to-day;
In the house of Obed Edom
Still he may safely stay
Who, dearer than all treasure
For which men toil and plod,
Shall prize the covenant-blessing,
The hallowed ark of God.

And never strife nor clamor
Shall break the tranquil spell
In which our Lord's beloved
Forever safely dwell.
In the house of Obed Edom,
In the sunlight or in dark,
Abides the ceaseless blessing
That rests within the ark.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

Bless God for starlight, and he will give you moonlight; praise him for moonlight, and he will give you sunlight; thank him for sunlight, and you shall yet come to the land where they need not the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light for ever and ever.—Spurgeon.

SERVING CHRIST FROM PRINCIPLE.

By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

A bright but modest boy in my Sunday School spent his pocket money in buying pigments and brushes. He contributed four or five pictures which were among the gems of the American department in the Chicago Exposition. Love of art, and not love of money, has been his inspiration; he painted conscientiously. "I had hoped," said a young man to D'Alembert, "that my paper would have given me a seat in the Royal Academy." "Sir," replied the great philosopher, "if you have no higher motive than that, you will never get a seat there; science must be her own exceeding great reward."

The sinner who comes to Christ with no other motive than to be saved from hell is not likely to be saved at all; his prayer is founded on sheer selfishness. The man who keeps Christ's commandments simply for selfish objects does not really keep them; for the essence and flavor of all Christian conduct lies in loyalty to Jesus Christ, and in doing right because he commands it. "Not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart;" that is the rule and the test of genuine Christian character. Spiritual adoption does not put servants into the kitchen, but children in the household who do work willingly. Whatever they do, they do as unto the Lord, heartily; i. e., because they love to do it. Dr. McLaren says, in his characteristic way: "The thought of Christ's command and of my poor toil as done for his sake will change constraint into cheerfulness, and make unwelcome tasks pleasant, and monotonous ones fresh, and trivial ones great. In that atmosphere the dim flame of obedience will burn more brightly, as a lamp unplugged into a jar of pure oxygen. Unselfish love of Christ is the only true consecration."

When our Master was on earth, he encountered and he had to rebuke the spirit which followed him only for the sake of the loaves and the fishes. Among his own band of disciples this wretched spirit broke out in requests for a "seat on his right hand" in his new empire which he was expected to establish. There were pitiful wrangles among them as to who should be the greatest. Christ rebuked this miserable selfishness by giving them to understand that whosoever served in the humblest way should stand the highest. It was from this lamentable lack of principle in their religion that the disciples turned cowards in the hour of danger, and all forsook him and fled. Nor would these men have ever "stood fire" under the tremendous assault of persecution afterwards if they had not received the wonderful baptism of Christ's Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Peter's gravel then turned into granite.

Ministers and Sunday School teachers make a great mistake when they urge their hearers or their scholars to become Christians for either the rewards of heaven or the escape from hell. We have no right to appeal to a purely selfish motive. Christ must be followed for his own sake, and righteousness must be chosen for its own sake. There is no virtue in avoiding sin merely because it brings a sting in this world and hell in the next world. Iniquity must be abhorred because God abhors it. Some people avoid certain sins as a house cat avoids the cupboard for fear of the cudgel of the

*—S. S. Quarterly Review exercise for Sunday, 23rd June, 1907.