

B. C. 1491.

LESSON IV.—MOSES AND AARON; or, The Chosen Leaders.

July 24.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The doubts and fears of Moses concerning his mission were slowly dispelled from his mind by a series of miracles. His hand became pale with leprosy in an instant; and as suddenly was cleansed; his rod was transformed into a serpent, and the serpent became a rod once more: as tokens which would prove, to himself, his people, and the oppressors, that he spoke from the Lord. His hesitant utterance and lack of eloquence were promised the assistance of his brother Aaron's persuasive lips, and, finally, he is assured that the generation which long before had rejected his leadership, and sought his life, have gone down to their grave. So at last he bids farewell to Midian, and turns his footsteps toward the land of bondage, which he has not seen in forty years. At the same time a movement is taking place among the oppressed people in Egypt, led by Aaron, who is divinely directed to go toward his brother in the wilderness. At the mount of God the two venerable brothers meet with affectionate greetings, and together form their plans for the liberation of their people. They first call together the elders of Israel, and show them the signs that God has looked upon their sufferings, and has come to set them free. With bowed heads the people receive the message, and a new hope springs up in their hearts. Then the brothers enter the palace of Pharaoh, and present their moderate request, in the name of Israel's God, that the people may go into the wilderness for a religious service. To grant their petition would recognize the authority of Jehovah, and the king of Egypt spurns them from his presence, with contempt for their God and insults to his servants. The only result of their meeting with Pharaoh is that new burdens are heaped upon the oppressed people, and their hearts sink once more into despair.

Exod. 4. 27-5. 4.

[Memory verses 29-31.]

27 And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him, in the mount of God, and kissed him.

Gen. 27. 26: And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. Gen. 50. 1: And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. 2 Sam. 20. 9: And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. Matt. 26. 49: And forthwith [Judas] came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master: and kissed him. Acts 20. 37: and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

30 And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

Exod. 4. 16: He shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be...to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

31 And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL.

Verses 27. The Lord said. Moses was already on his way from Midian when this divine direction came to his brother in Egypt. **Aaron.** He was eighty-three years old, and having spent his life among the Israelites was fully acquainted with them and possessed influence over them. It is probable that he had been at work preparing for the coming struggle. His experience and ready utterance were of great service to Moses in the deliverance of the people, but he was easily controlled by circumstances and not qualified for leadership. **Go into the Wilderness.** He is directed where to find Moses, as otherwise he might have undertaken the longer and useless journey to Midian. **In the mount of God.** One journeying eastward and the other westward, they met at Mount Sinai. **Kissed him.** The embrace was mutual, and according to Oriental forms of greeting. The brothers may have met many times during the forty years, and conferred concerning the interests of their people.

28, 29. The Lord who had sent. Rather, "which God had charged him to do," a more literal translation. **All the signs.** The miracle of the leprous hand and the shepherd's staff changed into a serpent, as proofs of the divine commission. See vers. 2-7. **Moses and Aaron went.** Henceforth the work of liberation was carried on by the two brothers in a spirit of unity, Moses being the leader, and Aaron the spokesman. (1) God's workers should be united in their efforts, and free from jealousy. **All the elders.** The Israelites still maintained the patriarchal system, and the heads of the tribes and families exercised jurisdiction, subject to the Egyptian authorities. **Aaron spake.** Not only because more gifted in speech, but being better known to the people than Moses, who had been in exile during an entire generation. **Did the signs.** Aaron was to work the miracles before Pharaoh, and it was proper that he should show them to the Israelites, as Moses' representative. **Sign of the people.** Before the elders representing the people; though a public assembly of the families may have been summoned for the purpose.

31. The people believed. Recognizing the works as divine, and the messengers as coming from God, whom they still worshipped, with more or less knowledge of his attributes and of the covenant-destiny of Israel. (2) Trouble, often rather than ease, brings men to faith in God. **The Lord had visited.** In their distress they had deemed themselves forsaken by their God, but now they recognize him as returning for their deliverance. (3) God is always nearer than even his people realize. **Bowed their heads.** In token of reverence, faith and their willingness to obey the divine will. (4) When men are bowed down then God lifts them up.